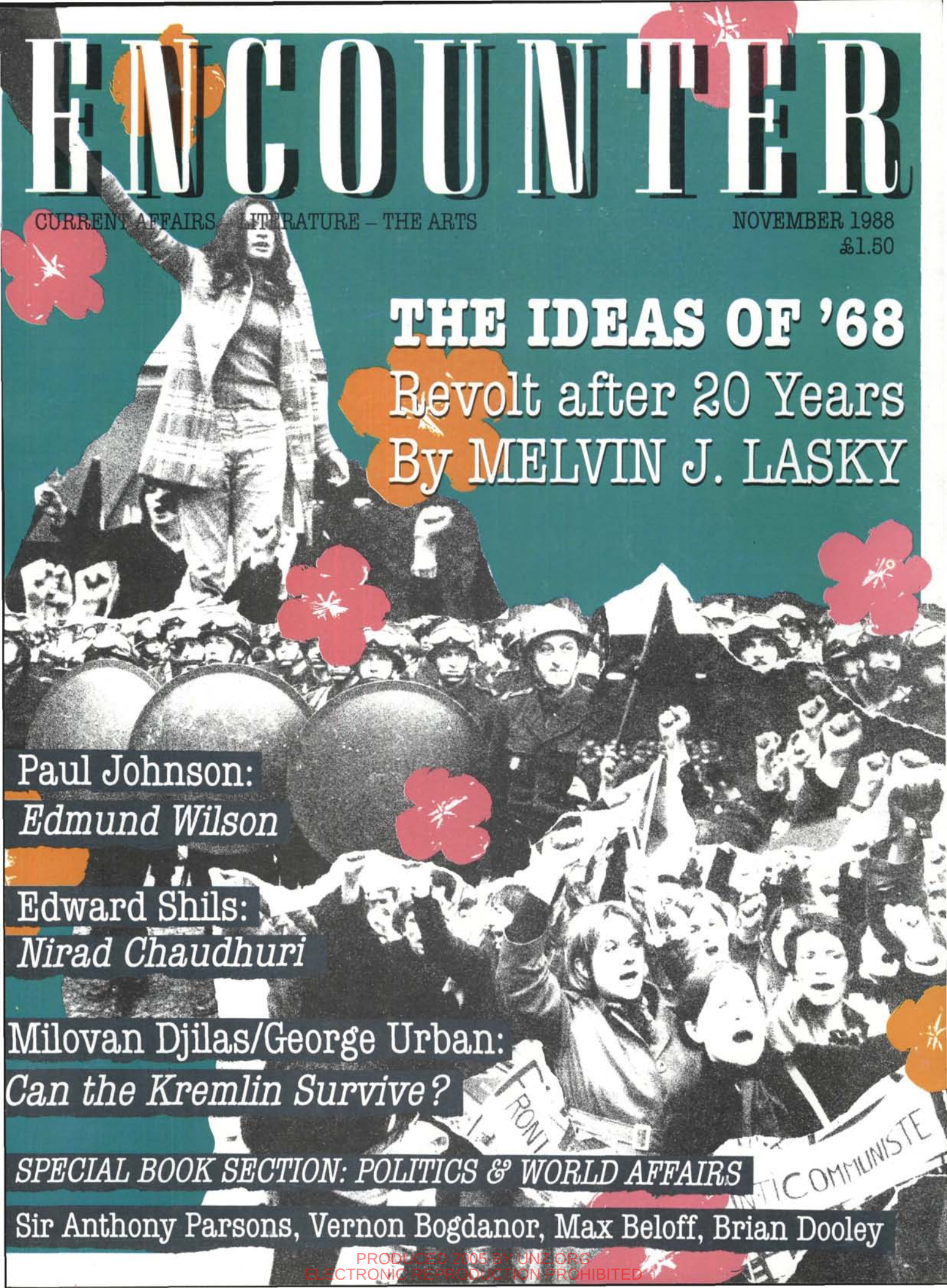


ENCOUNTER



CURRENT AFFAIRS LITERATURE - THE ARTS

NOVEMBER 1988

£1.50

THE IDEAS OF '68

Revolt after 20 Years

By MELVIN J. LASKY

Paul Johnson:
Edmund Wilson

Edward Shils:
Nirad Chaudhuri

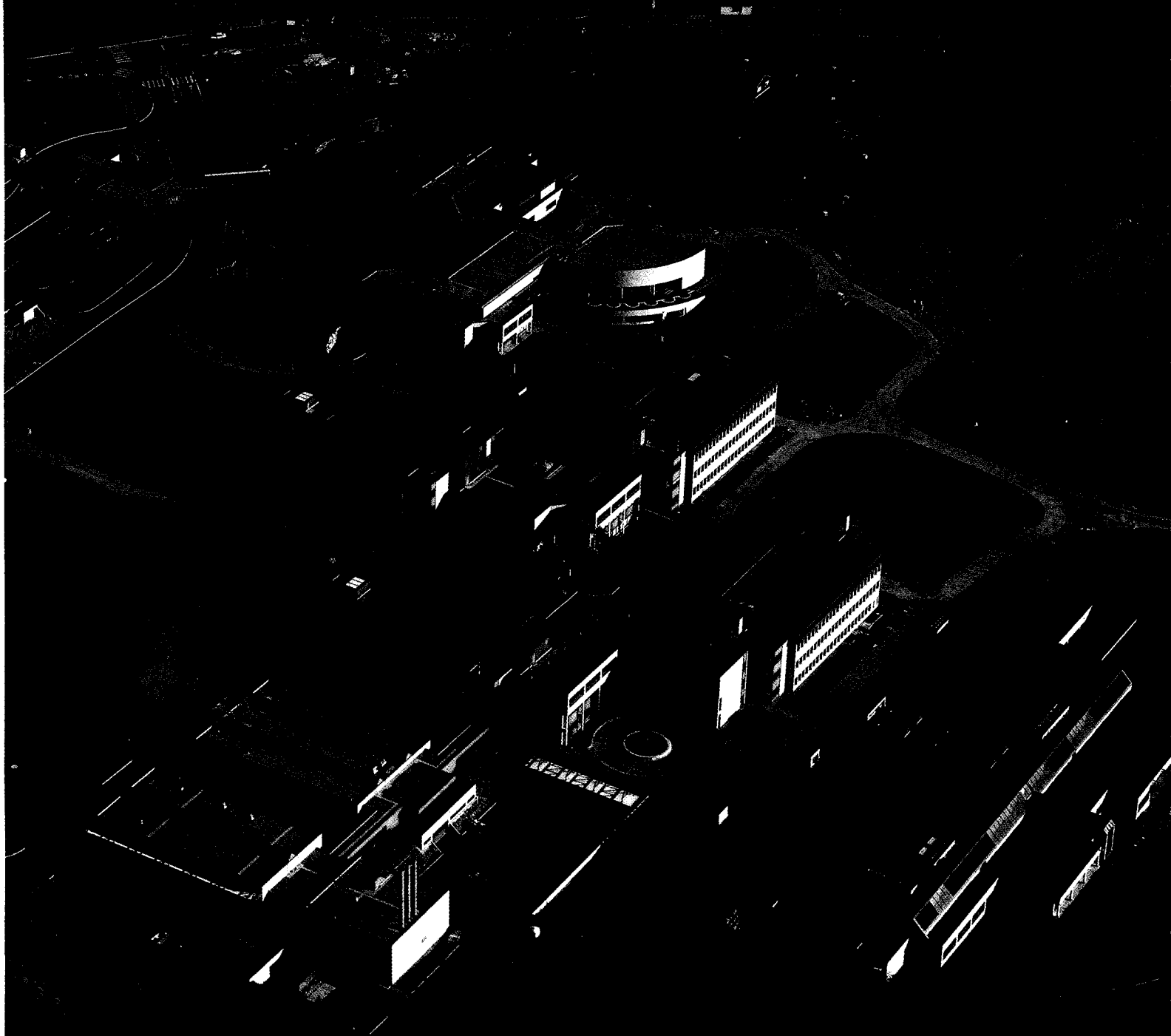
Milovan Djilas/George Urban:
Can the Kremlin Survive?

SPECIAL BOOK SECTION: POLITICS & WORLD AFFAIRS

Sir Anthony Parsons, Vernon Bogdanor, Max Beloff, Brian Dooley

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Solving the world's nutritional problems is one of the major challenges of the future. The new Nestlé Centre for nutrition research near Lausanne symbolizes not only our belief in tomorrow, but also our confidence that one can successfully meet this challenge. Employing 400 people, the Centre is one of the largest of its kind in the world. Here nutrition science, food technology and biological science work hand in hand, creating an atmosphere of inter-disciplinary dialogue which in turn leads to innovative achievement.



EDITORS
 Melvin J. Lasky
 Richard Mayne
 Anthony Hartley

EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER
 Anthony Robinson

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
 Bryan Healing

ASSISTANT EDITOR
 Jacqui Lewis

EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS
 Margot Walmsley
 J. C. Hall

ADVERTISMENT DIRECTOR
 Antony Pullen

PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISING
 Anne Loukes

ASSISTANT TO THE PUBLISHER
 Janice Ward

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
 Sue Walker

CIRCULATION MANAGER
 Pat Savage

CHIEF ACCOUNTANT
 Pat Shutler

ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT
 Shirley Lewis

RECEPTION
 Alison Loomes

ADVISORY BOARD
 Maurice Cranston
 D. J. Enright
 Gerald Frost
 Anthony Hartley
 Leo Labedz
 Edward Shils
 Anthony Thwaite
 George Urban
 John Weightman

PUBLISHING ADVISERS
 Lord Ardwick
 Blouke Carus
 Lord Cudlipp
 Leon Levy
 Julio Nunez
 Julia Robinson
 Jack Watmough
 Gary Bogard (chairman)

COVER
 David Costa

ENCOUNTER

NOVEMBER 1988 VOL. LXXI No. 4 ISSN 0013-7073

CONTENTS

The Ideas of '68	Melvin J. Lasky	3
Paukenmesse (story)	Aileen Ireland	19
Djilas on Gorbachov (II)	Milovan Djilas, George Urban	21
Column	M	34

POEMS

Alan Brownjohn 18, Julie O'Callaghan 31, Gerard Woodward 32,
 Gavin Ewart 36, Vernon Scannell 62, John Gohorry 67

NOTES & TOPICS

The Preoccupation with Equality	Kenneth Minogue	39
Paris Notebook	Jean-François Revel	41

SPECIAL BOOK SECTION: POLITICS & WORLD AFFAIRS

The Politics of Personality	Vernon Bogdanor	44
"In War, Resolution . . ."	Anthony Parsons	50
Arguing about British Politics	Max Beloff	56
The Kennedy Legend in Close-up	Brian Dooley	60
Books Encountered	R.M.	63

EAST & WEST

The Unknown Indian	Edward Shils	64
--------------------	--------------	----

PORTRAIT

Edmund Wilson	Paul Johnson	68
---------------	--------------	----

THEATRE

Promise & Delight	Edward Pearce	76
-------------------	---------------	----

BOXES

Sartre's Children (Patrick Marnham) 5, "Help This Nice Man" (William Safire) 29, A Fable
 About Stalin (Chingiz Aytmatov) 30, Caring about Compassion (Brian Walden) 40,
 Shakespeare among the Guerrillas (Michael Hornsby) 77

AUTHORS LETTERS LIFE & LETTERS

78

79

81

© 1988 by Encounter Ltd. Ten issues a year (July-August and September-October are single issues). Per copy: UK £1.50: USA \$3.50. Back numbers £2.50 (\$5.00). Postage/packaging: 75p (\$2.00). Annual subscriptions: UK £18.00: USA & Canada \$39.00 air-freight: India £20.00 by air. Elsewhere £19.00. Address for all departments: Encounter Ltd., 44 Great Windmill Street, London W1V 7PA (01-434 3063): UK Trade Distributors: Cutler Glen, 13 Newington Industrial Estate, Crampton Street, London SE17 3AZ (01-708 1308). Second-class postage paid at Rahway, NJ. US Postmaster: send address corrections to Encounter, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Ltd Inc., 10B Engelhard Avenue, Avenel, NJ 07001. Manuscripts are returned only if accompanied by s.a.e. (English stamp) or International Reply Coupons.

EL (English stamp) or International Reply Coupons. PROHIBITED



Me and my shadow.

Is industry appealing enough to students?

Pluck sixthform boys and girls from the classroom, let them shadow industrial managers at work for a week and the answer is 'yes'.

At Esso, we've proved the value of workshadowing so conclusively that it's now a permanent part of our curriculum.

In Industry Year 1986, we put forward the highest number of managers to be shadowed. In 1987, we increased this number. This year, it goes up again.

The sixthformers come from all kinds of schools. And whether they shadow the company

secretary or a plant manager, they attend every meeting.

Nobody holds back just because a shadow is present. The shadow has to see industry as it really is. Otherwise it's a waste of time.

For teachers, we have made a film and video on workshadowing.

If your school would like a copy on free loan, please write to us (stating 16mm, VHS or BETA format)

at Viscom Limited, Park Hall Road Trading Estate,
London SE21 8EL.

We hope it sheds more light.



Quality at work for Britain for 100 years.
A MEMBER OF THE EXXON GROUP.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Melvin J. Lasky

The Ideas of '68

A Retrospective on the 20th Anniversary Celebrations of "the Student Revolt"

1. Delirium in a Subculture



WHAT, IF ANY, were the powerful, moving, and possibly profound ideas that propelled the movement of 1968, with its marches and demonstrations, teach-ins and sit-ins, petitions and violent confrontations, which agitated most of the Western world two decades ago? There are a number of schools of thought (and non-thought) on the subject.

Many historians and critics deny the presence of any clear or definable ideas at all; there was nothing, they say, of any intellectual coherence, hardly a notion or concept that might with a stretch of the philosophical imagination be associated with the recognisable tradition of social and political theory from, say, Plato to Bertrand Russell, John Dewey and Karl Popper. There is much to be said for this thesis.

The self-styled heroes of '68 would not deny this altogether, but they have always (especially in the 20th anniversary festivities) put in a claim for something more ambitious and even historic: namely, that as the heirs and heiresses of all the ages, they were able to pick and choose in the supermarket of old cultures, sometimes with reason, more often with passion, always with a new and unprecedented freedom to "do their own thing", to fight and play and love and sing and, all the while, to go about "changing the world".

My own school of thought, founded in the maelstrom of these events (and coloured by my diary of the year from Berkeley to Berlin), argues the following. It was a special delirium that afflicted the first-born post-War generation, freshmen who arrived on a new scene of affluence and opportunity. Brandishing their campus youth cards, they felt entitled to a *Weltanschauung* on the cheap: leftovers of a dog-eared paperback culture, smatterings of Marx and Freud, excerpts from vitriolic pamphleteering by Trotsky, a gaggle of slogans from Wilhelm Reich and R. D. Laing, the selected

works of Dr Herbert Marcuse (or what was told of them in earnest rap sessions), a fantasy or two from Tolkien's world of the hobbits, and (since Pestalozzi was long dead) a seminal schooldays chapter from A. S. Neill. Out of this ragtag and bobtail subculture, sanctioned by their friendly neighbourhood psychiatrist, blessed by the stage army of defrocked priests and pastors, defended by jurists weary of the law, and cheered on by ageing intellectuals and poets longing for lost puberty, they went on to the ultimate four-letter obscenity: the bomb (home-made). The onset of the darkness unto death and destruction was the cue for the curtain to come down on "the theatre of revolution".

IN THE BEGINNING, the pioneers could thrash about in all the subcultures of radical chic—among light-headed millionaires who were titillated by the idea of capitalism dying; in the pop and drug communes, the pill and promiscuity cults, and the artsy-craftsy avant-garde. It became a very popular front, uniting practically everything on the Left except, of course, the proletariat. But the flowering of the New Left everywhere in the Western world was essentially a phenomenon of the middle class: exercising its propensities for haphazard altruism, for fun and excitement and impassioned commitment, until it wearied of its own excess—and became frightened of the degeneration into random peripheral violence of a hard core of believers who began to practise what they all preached.

I remember the day in New York when Dwight Macdonald, who had a reputation for radical scepticism and even iconoclasm concerning everything that spilled over from mass- and mid-culture (Hollywood films, pop slogans, Left-wing orthodoxies, etc.), became a '68 enthusiast. He was invited to Morningside Heights, where the Columbia sit-in students gave him a hero's welcome to the waving of red flags and the chanting of non-negotiable demands. "It's just like Spain!" he told me. But the cause of Spain in the 1930s, as he must still have remembered (he knew his Orwell on the vile betrayals in Catalonia), was a deeply flawed cause; and its tragedy should have served as a warning not to succumb again to the naive, uncritical idealism of an "Abraham Lincoln Brigade" mentality.

2. Camp-Followers of the Children's Crusade



BUT DID intellectuals (and their sentence-structured ideas) ever guide or lead the popular insurgence of feeling, vibrations, and inchoate sloganised opinion? Or did they follow the outbursts of enthusiasm and outrage, passion and protest, that raged around them and gave them an opportunity to be, at long last, one with progressive popular forces and to feel rejuvenated and relevant? Which came first, the chicken or the egghead?

The plot unfolded differently in different places and at different times. But I still suspect that the American "kids", almost exclusively urban and middle class, might well have revolted against the Viet Nam draft, their bourgeois parents, frustrating sexual impermissiveness, established educational disciplines, and all the rest, if Paul Goodman, Susan Sontag, Charles Reich, Noam Chomsky, Allen Ginsberg, C. Wright Mills, and others had never written a word.

It was clearly different in France and Germany, where abstract theory and rhetorical formulations are traditional signals for insurgence. The brilliance of Sartre and Fanon, of Adorno and Habermas, of Marcuse and Gramsci, gave a propelling impetus and a liberating blessing for youthful, muddled masses, yearning to be free to dance their war games on the streets of Paris, Berlin, and Rome.

No, the American literati, for the most part, were camp-followers of the children's crusade. Too old to march or to battle with the police, too bald for the new long-haired modishness, too self-conscious or too stout for the torn and faded blue-jean uniforms, they nevertheless felt, for a season or two, part of the Movement. Mary McCarthy flew to Hanoi and discovered reasons to admire the anti-American cause for its justice, fairness, and incorruptibility. Norman Mailer stood for an hour on the steps of the Pentagon.

And when it was all over, and the songs were only golden oldies for the sentimental kids whose "Sixties" remained in their memory as the best years of their lives, the intelligentsia went on to other literary projects (less spectacular, more coherent) as if the so-called "Revolution" had never happened. The ageing youth, never having had what could be called ideas, simply held on to nostalgia and failed to move on to reflection or self-criticism—in short, to a mature understanding of what they had been through (and how, in most respects, they had failed so dismally). Amnesia took hold of the professional literati. They mostly forgot what they had said and written. Except for a few articles and essays here and there—by David Horowitz/Peter Collier (of *Ramparts* notoriety), by Joseph Epstein (now editor of the *American*

Scholar), and by a few others—there has been no thoughtful reevaluation of the decade that began in 1968.

An episode involving Susan Sontag, the celebrated avant-garde essayist, is apposite. Not so long ago, I wrote a few critical remarks about Sontag's attitudes in those days, and suggested how wrong she had been to ignore the harsh realities of Eastern Europe, especially Poland, and how mistaken she was about the "humanising renaissance" that would emerge from the revival of revolutionary socialism. As for her attitude toward the United States, it had certainly fallen on deaf ears among all the pro-American millions—from the Vietnamese boat people to the democrats in the *Solidarity* movement—who experienced no renaissance, only inhumane repression. She protested to me in the pages of *ENCOUNTER*, and her friends on the *New York Review of Books* were also outraged.¹ Had they all, indeed, forgotten?

In her controversial Town Hall speech (N.Y.C., 1982) where Sontag belatedly accused the radical Left of some variety of "fascism" (and of Communism, as being only "successful fascism"), she confessed that "people on the Left have willingly or unwillingly told a lot of lies [but] we were unwilling to identify ourselves as anti-Communists". She had once dismissed a classic book by the Nobel Prize winner Czeslaw Milosz as "an instrument of cold war propaganda". Now she said that she "understood the nature of the Communist tyranny". Presumably, over the intervening years, she has changed her mind radically, if slowly, about her flirtation with what she once chastely called "a promiscuous idea of revolution".

But Russia and Poland and North Viet Nam were far-away places about which the '68ers knew nothing. "Amerika" was closer to home, and the ideas then current were reinforcing visceral sentiments about an alienated homeland. In the spirit of the time, in her 1968 book *Trip to Hanoi*, Sontag had penned a paean of praise to her new feelings and concluded:

"Someone who enjoyed new feelings of that kind . . . is never the same again. In him [i.e., her], the 'revolution' has just started, and it continues. So I discovered that what happened to me in North Viet Nam did not end with my return to America, but is still going on."

Presumably it has now stopped. Good for her (if bad for the "revolution").

For Sontag, the anti-Americanism of American youth was a proper and desirable style of radical will. In an essay, "What's Happening in America" (1966), published in her collection *Styles of Radical Will*, she wrote:

"America was founded on genocide. . . . It's the whole character structure of modern American man, and his imitators, that needs rehauling. . . . The truth is that Mozart, Pascal, Boolean algebra, Shakespeare, parliamentary government, baroque churches, Newton, the emancipation of women, Kant, Marx, and Balanchine ballets don't redeem what this particular civilisation has wrought upon the world. The white race is the cancer of human history. . . . This is a doomed country, it seems to me; I only pray that, when America founders, it doesn't drag the rest of the planet down."

¹ See the letters from Susan Sontag and Robert Silvers in *ENCOUNTER*, November 1982, p. 94.

Presumably she no longer believes this. But, unlike the hippies who have put on white collars to sell stocks and bonds, and owe nobody any explanation save that they "just grew up", Sontag still owes her readers an intellectual balance-sheet. My own modest little prayer would be to have, at long last, a full account from her of the Style that Failed, or how radical will went wrong.

But, as I have already suggested, the self-critical honesty of a previously over-ideologised generation is, alas, not to be found among the protagonists of '68. The errors of the Marxist pro-Communist fellow-travellers of the period before World War II led, after disenchantment, to innumerable "God that Failed" studies in which men of the repute of Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, Louis Fischer, André Gide, Manès Sperber, Whittaker Chambers, Howard Fast, and Gustav Regler contributed incisive and candid autobiographical studies of where, and why, they had gone astray.

Their mental make-up, for all their misguided passions, had an essentially rational base. Ideas, even when starting from false premises, had a certain logical coherence; and when the evidence to the contrary reached overwhelming proportions, they conceded, sadly but directly, that their utopia and revolution were a snare and a delusion. But when so-called ideas are only a mixture of rhetoric, gesture, and visceral outburst, no minds can possibly be changed. All that happens is that a generation becomes hoarse, becomes weary of marching and dancing, takes to quieter ways of life. Twenty years on, hundreds of thousands who were excited by the '68 revolution and the dream of an alternative culture remain loyal to the memory, and leave no meaningful record of self-understanding. They had no real idea of what they were doing then, and no thoughtful comprehension of why they have changed, or how society has become different, or both.

"Sartre's Children"



Paris
TWENTY YEARS AGO, the '68-ers who wrecked the pleasant student quarter of Paris in which I now live, did it in the name of a brave new socialist world. Today . . . there is no one who believes that . . . François Mitterrand . . . will try to administer another dose of socialism.

In 1968 the student leader, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, hardly needed a political philosophy since he was of German-Jewish origin and in those innocent times that was, in some extraordinary way, a political philosophy in itself. The students called him "L'Allemand" and

liked watching the mixture of prejudices which Cohn-Bendit's background evoked in the French bourgeois mind, that is in the minds of their parents.

IT WAS PART OF a vast ignorance of the '68-ers to know that the United States was "as fascist as the Nazis" and it was part of their vast over-confidence to invite Sartre to address them in the Sorbonne and then to dismiss him to his face as "a great artist but a bum politician". They may even have been half right about that; but, right or not, where are they now?

MANY OF THE '68-ers are now doing very well out of the very "System" which they formerly swore to overthrow. They are in senior management, or heading university departments, or overcharging their clients in the law courts. If you marched around with them chanting "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh", this is rather depressing. But some of the '68-ers have continued in the logic of their political infancy. And that is more depressing still.

TAKE THE CASE OF Frederich Oriach, for example. Mr Oriach is currently serving a prison sentence for writing a magazine article which was judged sympathetic to the "Action Directe" terrorist group. Nobody has suggested that

Frederich Oriach did more than argue the terrorist case. But he certainly chose his moment to prance on to the stage. In 1986, one month after the last of the September bombs had exploded in Paris, one month before the shooting down in the street of Georges Besse (head of Renault), Oriach wrote that he did not regret the earlier terrorist murder of General Audrian as he "did not regret the death of Napoleon or the Tsar or Franco". In being shot down in the street, General Audrian had died "a natural death" since he had devoted his life to selling arms.

Last December, Oriach was given six years for turning that phrase.

LAST NOVEMBER a child of 1968, metaphorically conceived amid the tear gas and flying cobblestones of the Boulevard Saint Michel, Max Frerot, who was a real terrorist, was arrested after being on the run for two years and was charged with two murders and a bomb attack.

"Did you know that Sartre once said 'I support violence as a political weapon when it is necessary'?"

he asked the police inspector who was questioning him. Nor was he just being cheeky. Max Frerot learnt his politics at the Lycée in Lyons from his history teacher, André Olivier, who later founded the Lyons branch of "Action Directe". Frerot was a model pupil. He even did his military service in the paratroopers so that he could learn about bombs, and in due course he became the "armourer" of "Action Directe".

THE LEADERS of that group are now [March 1988] in their twelfth week of hunger strike.

Over the weekend all four of them refused to be fed intravenously with vitamins. If they are allowed to persist in this refusal, they will die quite soon. Already there is a Left-wing committee at work trying to persuade the Government "to respect their human rights" and allow them the status of political prisoners, so that they can end their hunger strike. If the authorities decide to feed them forcibly, the same committee will probably protest about that "violation of their human rights" as well.

As for the hunger strikers, they still suffer from the delusion that their terrorism is supported by the oppressed workers of France.

The muddle of '68 lives on.

Patrick Marnham
in THE INDEPENDENT (London)

3. Sartre as Godfather Figure

IF THERE ARE two constituent elements that indelibly mark the political attitudes of '68, they are (1) the longing for peace, and (2) the justification of violence. They were always seen to be contradictory except by the enthusiasts of the movement who were noisily committed to "the fight", "the struggle", or, elsewhere, *la lutte* and *der Kampf*. Jean-Paul Sartre was, in this respect, the intellectual godfather figure of the international movement. Not one in a thousand had actually read his books, but there was a kind of trick e-down effect to his ideological flamboyance, as his folly appealed to their folly.

I once listened, later on, to Daniel Cohn-Bendit offering an explanation of his own intellectual sources:

"Why did people think Marcuse was our intellectual leader? It was a joke. Not one amongst us had read Marcuse. A few had read some Marx, of course, and maybe Bakunin too, and some pages of Althusser and Henri Lefebvre as well as Mao and Guevara. The political militants had all read Sartre . . . but the movement was not inspired by any author in particular."

One of Sartre's biographers adds this: ". . . Sartre followed the events [of '68] from the outside, understood them, and recognised in them ideas close to his own. How could he have failed to respond to euphoric slogans that put language, desire, and freedom in power?"² Elias Canetti, who listened in the yard of the Sorbonne to Sartre's speech to a student meeting, thought that "very few writers could have had such an extraordinary appeal to students". His French biographer is a little hesitant here: ". . . He was Sartre, true, but what was the 63-year-old Sartre to a crowd of 20-year-old students who had probably never even read him? . . ." He himself confessed, in a meeting with his preferred Far Left faction (the Maoists who made him the Editor of their paper, *La Cause du Peuple*): "There are lots of things I could do for you—but at 67 the most I can wish for is that I have enough time to see the revolution. . . ." Still, there were Goethean *Wahlverwandtschaften*, elective affinities, in the ardour of an ageing revolutionary writer and the passions of a crowd of enthusiasts who felt encouraged, and even sanctified, by his fame and indeed esoteric literacy.

For it was Sartre who inspired Picasso's famous dove of peace, and it was Sartre who blessed the *plastiqueurs* who

delivered bombs to the Algerian terrorists. When the Baader-Meinhof gang was caught in Germany and confined to a Stuttgart prison, it was Sartre who paid them a comradely visit. I remember the press conference in the nearby Zeppelin Hotel in December 1974, and Sartre (in a leather-jacket)—using Daniel Cohn-Bendit (in a riot-frayed yellow sweater) as his interpreter—was his old irrepressible self. By saluting every Leftist dictator from Stalin and Mao and Tito to Castro and Ho Chi Minh, the French philosopher with a world-wide following made it dazzlingly clear that slavery is really a form of authentic existential freedom.

BUT SARTRE'S INFLUENCE as a political philosopher and ideologue, which enabled him to play the pied piper of the Children's Crusade of '68, went even further. With unparalleled dialectical skill, he had argued throughout the post-War period—replete with revelations about Soviet concentration camps, which even Gorbachov now concedes—that reality is really fantasy. The camps simply did not exist. For Sartre, it was always my Left, my Revolution, right or wrong; and neither could do any wrong. Mistakes, yes; mishaps and even horrors, perhaps; but a deep, inextinguishable historic wrong, *jamais!* Committed to "the obvious superiority of the socialist camp", he was quite beyond reason and argument. Opposition, therefore, to any such mistakes, horrors, and crimes was always tantamount to treason to the Left's progressive ideals, and an unforgivable desertion to the ranks of the hated bourgeoisie. His mind was impervious to the arguments of old friends such as Albert Camus, Raymond Aron, and André Malraux.³

Once Sartre had published a short story by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, in his *Les Temps Modernes*. But when Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir were in Moscow, Solzhenitsyn refused to see them: why should he shake the hands of the world's most consistent apologists for the *Gulag*? They were slightly bewildered at the response, and de Beauvoir recorded: "His reaction surprised us. There was no doubt that Sartre knew him better than he knew Sartre." Here erred Mme de Beauvoir. Solzhenitsyn, then an isolated dissident in Russia, knew Sartre well enough. But the youthful rebels did not, and when they came to sense the errors of their ways, an old and dying Sartre gave last interviews to young and chastened questioners to the effect that he was reconsidering the mistakes he had made and it should all have been quite different.

² Annie Cohen-Solal, *Sartre: A Life* (1987), p. 459.

³ It would take us too far afield to offer a broader sketch of other literary and intellectual figures. Many others influenced, in some decisive way, the atmosphere and "climate of opinion" in various countries where the "ideas of '68" led to the exuberant outburst of moral fervour, permissiveness, activist ardour, cults of violence, etc. In his new book of intellectual portraits, *Intellectuals*, Paul Johnson traces the specific roles of such peripheral figures as Cyril Connolly and Kenneth Tynan in England, Rainer Maria Fassbinder in Germany, and Norman Mailer, Noam Chomsky, and James Baldwin in the USA.

See Johnson's treatment of Sartre (ch. 9) and his concluding chapter "The Flight from Reason", in which he discusses "a sinister climacteric" in the life of millenarian intellectuals, losing their way in "the wasteland of extremism" (pp. 306-42).

What is striking about Johnson's critique is that few, if any, of these highly literate talents—unlike Johnson himself—came around to seeing that their gods had failed. They would not even have recognised themselves (as did Paul Johnson who, in the *New Statesman*, had been the lyricist of the '68 revolt) in the old 16th-century mirror which Shakespeare, in Sonnet 129, had held up—precisely to those spirits ("perjur'd, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame") who, in later quests for utopia in the pursuit of revolution, revealed "the expense of spirit in a waste of shame".

*Past reason hunted, and, no sooner had,
Past reason hated. . . .
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme; . . .
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.*

The “big chill” had set in, even in Paris. This “unfreezing” of the hard, icy block of ‘68 ideology happened, as a matter of fact, only in France. In the major conflict of intellectual sentiments it can be ascribed to the foreign influence of the three horrific volumes of Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag* documentary and to the domestic triumph of Raymond Aron over the tired old voices of the *Rive gauche*.

The Left Bank, hit by the 1956 Hungarian revolution against Communism and the Soviet repression of the Czechoslovakian Spring in 1968, shed its automatic pro-Sovietism (if not its related anti-Americanism, which grew even louder as its fellow-traveller instincts and reflexes were frustrated) in the glaring light of the unspeakable Soviet concentration camps. Solzhenitsyn was a best-seller everywhere, but nowhere was he read by young people so seriously, and with such intellectual consequences, as in France. A youthful school of writers, called by the press the *nouveaux philosophes*, emerged to influence the climate of opinion after the abrupt end of an ideology that had enthralled previous generations. Young men like André Glucksmann and Bernard-Henri Lévy began to think for themselves, and general tribute was paid to the teachings of Raymond Aron, who (in the contrite saying of the day) “had always been right”.

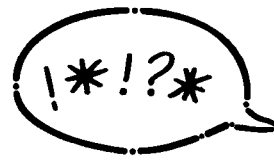
Aron was a professor in the Sorbonne, where he had withstood bullying threats and insults. And when the tumult and the shouting had subsided, he made the woundingly obvious summing-up of truths that had been lost in the din. There had been no revolution, and no revolutionary changes could be discerned: either in the university (though much had been damaged) or in the economy; neither in the class structure nor in private life. The age of permissiveness had proceeded apace after the pharmacological breakthrough of the pill. Expanding women’s rights were a long-term sociological accompaniment of the expanding manpower needs of the industrial society.

The children of almost a quarter-century of unparalleled post-War peace and prosperity had only indulged themselves in fun and games, using society as a play-pen. With so much time and talent on their hands, they had groped for, and were seized by, certain large sentiments, and a new, agitated climate of opinion was induced in which they could dream and demand the impossible—total felicity, now.

The mind-set had no analysis to support it (only warmed-over bits of Marxist social science) and no integrated tactics and strategy. “Left-fascist” inspiration (which, in its way, also touched the young Mussolini) propelled them to living dangerously. Ulrike Meinhof carried her German bombs around in her red cosmetics case; Giangiacomo Feltrinelli

blew himself up on a Milan pylon while trying to disrupt the city’s power supply. Above all, the rebels of ‘68 knew nothing of the past, littered with frayed utopias and failed revolutions. Aron pointed out to them that it was all (in Tocqueville’s prescient phrase of 1848) merely “the theatre of revolution”.⁴

4. Anglo-Saxon Differences



ELSEWHERE in the West, among the Anglo-Saxons, there was no Sartre and no Aron. Dr Marcuse died, still strong in the faith. Charles Reich, rich from the sales of his *Greening of America* best-seller, disappeared without a trace. Norman Mailer wrote bad novels (for money), and made worse films (for more). James Baldwin spent the last years of his life abroad, presumably waiting patiently for the fire next time. No, they had not reconsidered, recanted, re-evaluated. Yes, Sidney Hook—like Raymond Aron—had been right all along. But with a difference. Hook’s “embattled reason” could not have the instructive and chastening effect in an American context which was lacking in a general intellectual tradition, where the “kids” had no feeling for bookish ideas (some had wanted to burn the libraries) and were more taken with rock, joints, and profanity. Therein lies, I suggest, a problem.

If the revolts—not merely in the universities (think of the sit-ins and occupations from Berkeley to Oxbridge), but throughout a dynamically changing society that witnessed the incursions of permissiveness and women’s lib—were so similar and even parallel throughout a half-dozen different Western societies, why then should the aftermath have exhibited such puzzling divergences? It may well be that the heirs of the Anglo-American bodies of social thought, formed by such philosophers as John Dewey and Bertrand Russell, would not take stock of eruptive political experiences in the same spirit as could a Parisian élite that still treasured the resounding vocabulary of Condorcet and Robespierre, Danton and Victor Hugo.

England was also, in its way, exceptional. It was an old and settled monarchy, with parliamentary habits, that muddled along with its periodic reform bills, quite out of touch with the romantic resurgence of Continental peoples seeking to achieve independence, nationhood, and self-determination with weapons in their hands, a song on their lips, and a far-away look in their eyes. British students tried to ape the barricade antics of Danny Cohn-Bendit at the Sorbonne and in the *Quartier Latin*. But there was no Gallic rhetoric at their command that could give charm and plausibility to the effort to make the impossible dream come true (and *instantly*).

Students and radicals (a chap named Tariq Ali at their head) followed the Berlin demonstrations of Rudi Dutschke and tried to do likewise in Grosvenor Square; but the English, with three centuries of constitutional government behind them (unlike the French, Germans, and Italians), were not impressed by attempts to make extra-parliamentary

⁴ See, especially, Raymond Aron’s *Le Révolution introuvable* (1968), a classic analysis in the spirit of Tocqueville. On Aron generally, useful are Robert Colquhoun’s two volumes on “the philosopher in history” and “the sociologist in society” (Sage Publications, 1986). The review-articles “On Raymond Aron: Spokesman for an Age”, by Vernon Bogdanor, which was published in *ENCOUNTER* (April 1987), and John Weightman’s “Raymond Aron and the Problems of Commitment” in *The Times Higher Education Supplement* (14 November 1986, p. 17) are perhaps the best recent short accounts of Aron’s career and thought. His invaluable *Memoires: 50 ans de reflexion politique* (Julliard, 1983) has yet to appear in English.

noises on traffic-jammed streets. Still, their professors began to polish translations of Theodor Adorno and Louis Althusser (mostly to be published by New Left Books). Penguin immediately commissioned English versions of Marx's unpublished writings. And sociology flowered in academe, until the word sociologist became synonymous with a young man who knew nothing about anything in particular, but was convinced that the power structure of late capitalism had to be fundamentally restructured.

Yet none of this succeeded, not even in the sense that Cohn-Bendit and Dutschke were successes on the Continent, nor in their way Mark Rudd at Columbia and Mario Savio in California. In England, the New Left was neither flamboyant enough to make a sufficient theatrical sensation nor intellectual enough to bring Marxist metaphysics to a culture that was already suspicious enough of David Hume and John Stuart Mill. When it all fizzled out—when the fashions subsided, the energies waned, the issues disappeared (or became boring), the young men and women crossed to the other side of thirty, and the media no longer featured wild-eyed interviews—what was there left to say? Precious little to interest any general reader.⁵

So, with one exception (Paul Johnson's defection from the London Left, recorded in his book *Enemies of Society* (1977), I have nothing to report from this front. No playwright (with the possible exception of Tom Stoppard) emerged to look back in anger, or any other emotion: bitterness, disillusion, or remorse. Nobody wrote a book to record his or her outrage at having their youthful idealism enlisted on behalf of a movement that ultimately sustained the Gulag Archipelago. (Even a "restructured", Gorbachov-style, Russia looks like remaining a poverty-stricken police state.) No young intellectual looked back at his *maîtres penseurs* and tried to get at the roots of the ideological deception that had struck a generation blind. If, as Bernard-Henri Lévy put it, there is in our time a barbarism with a human face, one could find no one with enough curiosity to be puzzled by the paradox.

Among the Americans, as among the British, there is no new philosophy for the simple reason that there had been no old philosophy. There was, in the militant 1960s, no coherent set of ideas, no programmatic formulation that united the various protesters, no ideology against which, in a different mood of weariness and disappointment, heretics and dissidents might react.

⁵ One non-metaphysical aspect of the "greening" nostalgia remained, practical and insistent in its implications; it is perhaps the sole exception to the blank record of the '60s. The so-called "friends of the earth", with their tender-minded concern for eco-environmentalist ("green") problems turned up with the only "idea of '68" that proved to be lasting and constructive.

Strikingly enough, it was the single issue that was actually recognised by the East European rebels to be "relevant" or "meaningful" to their struggle for human rights. In the Soviet-dominated Communist bloc, natural resources were being ruthlessly exploited and wantonly wasted; and the Eastern tyrants didn't even have the Western justification that this could be the price of a prospering dynamic economy. Young Western rebels may have been "mystical" in their defence of a tree, or a river, or a piece of a mountainside, but their enthusiasm for bits of endangered nature proved to be infectious.

The major factor in the excitement was the Viet Nam War, the military commitment of the United States in the South-east Asian struggle on behalf of Saigon's non-communist government. Over the years, the war proved costly, hopeless, and divisive. Out of mixed motives, involving pacifist moralities and personal fears, young people, especially draft-age students, were in bitter opposition to Washington. When Washington made its decision to end the war in Viet Nam, to abandon its Saigon allies (a peace-making coup for which Henry Kissinger shared a Nobel Prize), the major reason for white American disaffection disappeared. With it went all the other features of the so-called peace movement—a political interest in the revolutionary theories of Ho Chi Minh; a sociological curiosity about the relations between capitalism, socialism, and war; a spirit of anti-Americanism that accused the native land of the original sins of racism and imperialism.

THE BASIC, simple-minded thesis of the New (and Old) Left was always that Capitalism means War. The idea that other factors—whether nationalistic or tribal arrogance, age-old predatory greed, or sheer human bloody-mindedness—could be part of the causal equation, and could indeed prevail as powerfully in a post-Capitalist world, among socialist or communist powers, was too complicated and just too disagreeable to be registered. Thus, the threat of a possible nuclear holocaust as a result of a Sino-Soviet conflict never received theoretical consideration. Ignored, too, were the outbursts of murderous hostilities between revolutionary régimes, all sworn to uphold Marxist or Third World values: the Asian massacres on the frontiers between Cambodia and Viet Nam; the African war-to-the-death between a Soviet-supported Dergue régime in Marxist-Leninist Ethiopia and the national-liberation guerrillas of Eritrea, supported by the Leftist government of Somalia; the massive war between revolutionary Iraq and revolutionary Iran.

World events stilled most of the ideologues and, suddenly, the universities were quiet again. No demonstrations, no protests, no occupations. Students (mostly) studied. They worried about the kind of careers they would pursue and the kind of jobs they would get. The whole of the rest of the world, from South Viet Nam to West Berlin—with the exception of certain special "manipulated" areas of new agitprop concentration (e.g. Chile and South Africa)—became far-away places of which they knew nothing and cared less.

Yet there were issues that could have called for a measure of intellectual or even philosophical consideration. For example: what kind of solutions did the heirs of Ho Chi Minh, so admired by the students in the West that they chanted his name in the streets of a dozen lands, bring to the problems of a united Viet Nam? Did the Party shake off its old Stalinist traditions? How much political repression was there? Could one say that the new Communist plans for agricultural and industrial production made any more sense than the record of Five-Year-Plans in the rest of the Communist world would lead us to expect? If war had brought death and destruction, so virtuously reviled by American youth, why had not peace—so valiantly inscribed on student banners—brought

progress and a recovery of material prosperity and human dignity? Enough here for a teach-in or two.

So far as I am aware, there has been no new thinking on this subject; and the publishers of Misses McCarthy and Sontag have not been pressing them to undertake another trip to Hanoi, or even Ho Chi Minh City, to see for themselves. Indeed, it is now a non-subject, despite all the academic apparatus of the crowded teach-ins of yore. It never called for serious thought.

With the termination of American military involvement, fears were ended and tempers cooled. No mental process was involved. International politics, sociology, diplomacy also became non-subjects. Only a handful of writers and professors persisted in such related (and lingeringly "relevant") subjects as whether the United States should intervene, using its military world power status to achieve certain foreign policy ends (peace, stability, human rights, national independence) in, for example, Angola, South Africa, Nicaragua, or the Middle East. The '68 movement, and even the New Left within it, had only offered paper-thin slogans, and for a few years effectively so; but where there are no ideas, there can be no continuing discussion.

5. The Black Disaffection



I HAVE REFERRED to the white disaffection. What of the black disaffection?

The irony of the anti-war movement was that it was predominantly a white, middle-class affair, although the American Negro population (as it was still then called) bore the brunt of the US Army's conscription—and, thus, the burden of the casualties of dead and wounded in South-east Asia. Psychologists have often pointed out the guilt displacement of white American students protesting at the murderousness of a war from which they were largely exempted. It is true that Martin Luther King had associated himself with the anti-war movement. But his essential thrust—and that of the whole organised Black movement, linked with the trade unions (and their leaders such as A. Philip Randolph and Roy Wilkins), the NAACP and the social democrats (e.g., Bayard Rustin)—was on the home front of civil rights. Here, except for small extremist grouplets (to which I will come in a moment), the political strategy was peaceful if also passionate, gradualist if also demanding. By and large, it took the forms of the classic and eminently successful reformist movements of the 19th and 20th centuries in which the slave trade was abolished, the electoral franchise expanded, the sectarian-religious discrimination abandoned, etc.

So-called bourgeois society has never known a *status quo*. Its very dynamics call for restless, ceaseless change, its culture for the new and innovative. The drive to expand rights for

minorities has always been part of a system that acknowledges the rights of pressure groups; and the system responds, within a constitutional process, to minorities' old needs and new demands. So it was in six different US administrations—those of Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan—with the result that since the March on Washington (led by the late Martin Luther King to mark the hundredth anniversary of the "Emancipation Proclamation" of President Abraham Lincoln) there has been a vast change on the racial scene. Now, more than ever before in their history, American blacks are sharing in the rights and privileges of an affluent US democracy. Their representation in the university population, among professional groups (doctors, lawyers, engineers), among politicians (sheriffs, mayors, Congressmen, indeed Presidential candidates) has substantially increased.

This, of course, was not "the Revolution" the radical black intelligentsia had preached in the 1960s, using the slogan "Black Power". James Baldwin had threatened (in the softly elegant columns of *The New Yorker*) "the fire next time"—the title of his inflammatory pamphlet for black militancy—and Stokely Carmichael, Huey Newton, and Bobby Seale advocated armed insurrection. Did any of these men have second thoughts? No new or old philosophers, they. Only Eldridge Cleaver of the Black Panthers, the extremist group that once appeared to be leading the United States to the brink of war between the races, has uttered self-critical tones.

Cleaver was, in the beginning, the stormy poet of Black racial militance. His book *Soul on Ice* (1968)—quickly translated by all bourgeois European publishers as if it were the true voice of the groaning masses—even apologised for criminal rapists; he admitted to having been one, for which he served a prison sentence. His explanation was that, in the dialectics of revolutionary racial ethics, raping white women represented a moral compensation for past oppression. Cleaver found himself in exile when the law refused to recognise that advocating rape, murder, and arson was a proper means of social protest. He then tried living in Cuba, organising a movement of his own, with Castro's help, and subsequently did the same in North Africa, working with several "progressive" Left-wing governments.

ONE BY ONE, his illusions collapsed. In Castro's Cuba, he found a racism as bad as that he had complained about in the United States; even worse, since back home he at least had the freedom to complain. He began to feel that perhaps bourgeois liberties were not a farce, but the very real basis for extending democratic rights. The "Left-fascist" dictatorships of North Africa disillusioned him completely. These narrow, illiberal, corrupt, fanatical, hopeless societies were not the new world for which he had called his people to struggle and make sacrifices. He appealed to Washington to let him return; he was willing to stand trial for whatever charges were still on the books.

When he returned, he produced a new book, a sequel to his best-seller, entitled *Soul on Fire* (1978). If the incendiary image is still with us, it was not intended to be an echo of the old pyromaniac cry of "Burn, Baby, Burn!" that set fire to so many Negro ghettos (Harlem, Watts, Detroit) in self-des-

tructive acts of ideologised masochism. It referred to his latter-day sense of burning mission. He reconsidered the importance of constitutional liberties, recognised the collective inhumanity of totalitarian forms of government, and made a return to religious values the basis of personal morality in a free society. Was Cleaver, then, the only "new philosopher" in post-1968 America? Perhaps. Probably, in the old tradition of American Negro religiosity, he is rather a new "theologian", singing vaguely familiar spirituals of the Old South.

6. Freud to Lenin to Dr Spock

THUS, WHEN the '68 front of emotional white pacifism and rhetorical black revolutionism exhausted itself, little in the aftermath could be considered intellectually significant. When Patty Hearst returned to her family in California after her appalling spell of duty as an urban guerrilla with something called the Symbionese Liberation Army, she said it had been "like a bad dream".

I still find it strange, and regrettable, that in Freud-crazed America there was so little dream interpretation available. There were also the bad dreams of the university professors (thousands of them) who helped wave red flags on campus barricades, and those of the Weathermen terrorists who, after some clandestine years scurrying from the police (in the real underground, not the misnomer for the alternative scene), indicated to the FBI that they would like to come up for air. It was indeed a change in the weather, but surfacing was not a sign of repentance. The strategy was to find defence lawyers, face the relatively petty charges, and take advantage of softening public views.

Thus Mark Rudd and Bernadine Dohrn⁶ emerged from a life on the run. Rudd was the bemused young man of '68 who had thought he was beginning the world revolution when he found himself storming a "Winter Palace", only to discover

⁶ In *The Year of The Barricades* (1988), a history of the year 1968, David Caute records two atrocious remarks on p. 443. (He offers no analysis or comment; he is only too relieved when he can play the role of mere objective chronicler, far from the evaluative dangers of an interpretive historian.) They became the most famous pronouncements of those illegitimate children of the New Left.

Bernadine Dohrn (who had studied law in Chicago and became an SDS leader) had this to say when she learned of the murders in California by Charlie Manson and his "family":

"Dig! First they killed those pigs, then they ate dinner in the same room with them, and they even shoved a fork into a victim's stomach. Wild!"

Mark Rudd, competing in notoriety for "bloodthirsty chic" (the fashion in this peace-fighting, love-in brigade of the day, getting its high on graduating from non-violence and civil disobedience to stones, knives, guns, and sticks of dynamite):

"It's a wonderful feeling [Rudd to a Weathermen conference in Flint, Michigan, at Christmas 1969] to hit a pig. It must be a really wonderful feeling to kill a pig or blow up a building."

⁷ Quotations from Professor Morris Dickstein's report in the *New York Times Magazine*. "Columbia Recovered: Two Decades after the Student Uprising, Rebellion is only a Classroom Subject" (15 May 1988).

he was besieging the Low Library of Columbia University. He recently returned to Morningside Heights to lead the modest celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the great event. A teenage reporter on Columbia's student newspaper, *The Spectator*, declined to write him up. "He's a has-been", he said, "no story".

But there was a story, if the university spirits cared to put half a mind to it. A handful of militant students, black and white, are still committed to the "positive intolerance" which calls for bullying speakers; those whom they don't want to hear are harassed off the campus. In one recent altercation (when the New York police were called in, as in the old days) the doors of Hamilton Hall were chained; and a sympathetic professor tried persuading the students in the old rhetoric, "You can't remove the chains of oppression by putting them on classroom doors. . . ." Evidently they are still being taught at Columbia University that they "have nothing to lose but their chains". (So many radical students of '68 chose to remain in the groves of academe and, as teachers, persist in the echoes and the mummery.) The celebratory reunion "20 Years After" had the veterans wearing crimson arm-bands and flaming-red name-tags that identified them with buildings on the Columbia campus (Hamilton, Low, Fayerweather, Math), as if they were some breed of combat heroes (Verdun, Ypres, Somme) or a band of miraculous holocaust survivors (Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau). . . .

One history professor reminisced: "I got caught up in those events without knowing what I was doing. I was sleep-walking. I sentimentalised the students beyond belief. I didn't understand. . . ." The measure of understanding evidently hasn't increased over the years; in the words of one reporter who returned to the campus scene:

"As the faculty has grown more radical, the students have grown more conservative. . . . Yesterday's radical students are today's restive junior faculty, yesterday's burning issues are today's problems in theory and methodology."

What stirs Yankee rebel hearts these days is a methodical commitment to revolutionise . . . the "core curriculum". In Stanford the chant has gone up (and with the somnambulist professors humming along), "*Ho, ho, ho!—Western Culture must go!*" In Columbia, ill-educated teenagers who have mis-spent their youth "cracking textbooks" in order to pass entrance exams, now hear tell of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and other exotic "Third World classics" and simply long to have them all officially assigned (with full course-credits) on their college reading-lists.

After the mini-revolt, one Columbia professor (an activist historian named Eric Foner who, ironically enough, holds the chair held by the late Richard Hofstadter, whose cautionary words were shouted down in '68) summed up the achievements of the "Student Revolution" thus:

"Everything here functions a lot better than it did before 1968. There's a much greater diversity in the student body. . . ."⁷

What a triumph for the bureaucratised demiurge of history—it worked in its mysterious managerial way to come up

with an improved administrative efficiency and a better mix of indigenous personnel!

This speciousness passes itself off everywhere as historical perspective. In Paris last May, on the occasion of an exhibition of *les événements* installed at the *Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine*, a press conference at the Invalides brought together police chiefs and *anciens militants*. Jean-François Godschau, a student leader at Nanterre University, offered the bottom line of revolutionary achievement: today's parents got on better with their children than the parents of '68. Again, if true, what a triumph! They had played at being Lenin and wound up with Dr Spock. A reporter observed: "... M. Godschau, relaxed and neat, was wearing a club tie and short hair. He is still at Nanterre, though now as a teacher." In the end, according to correspondents, one police chief came out best. Although at the time *Préfet* Maurice Grimaud was held up as a figure of hatred by the students, and reviled for brutality, he argued confidently that 1968 was "part of a French tradition of revolutionary occasions" and all's well that ends well. Looking back after 20 years one could discern the excesses and exaggerations of the Events:

"The students equated de Gaulle, by then aged 78, with Adolf Hitler. They equated the Paris police with the *Gestapo*, and this was less than 25 years after de Gaulle had driven the *Gestapo* out of town. A Minister of Education who advised sexually-frustrated students to 'cool off in the swimming pool' was told that he sounded like a Nazi. The student who made this remark, at the time regarded as significant, Danny Cohn-Bendit, was of German-Jewish descent, and might have been expected to spot the difference. . . ."

OH, COHN-BENDIT was around somewhere too, and his most significant retrospective contribution was the remark that "because of May '68 he himself became hooked on publicity and it still acts on him like a drug. . . ."⁸

⁸ My quotations are from *The Independent*, 4 May 1988, Patrick Marnham's dispatch: "Roll Up for the History Tour of the 'Events' of '68'".

⁹ Interviews in Ronald Fraser's documentary study, *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt* (Chatto & Windus, £14.95).

¹⁰ See among other writings, Irving Kristol, "A Different Way to Restructure the University", *New York Times Magazine* (8 December 1968); Daniel Bell & Irving Kristol, *Confrontation: The Student Rebellion & the Universities* (1969); Seymour Martin Lipset, *Rebellion in the University* (1971); Maurice Cranston, *The New Left* (1970); Diana Trilling, *We Must March, My Darlings* (1978); Raymond Aron, *The Elusive Revolution: Anatomy of a Student Revolt* (1969).

Also: Arthur Schlesinger Jr., "America 1968: The Politics of Violence", *Harpers Magazine* (August 1968); John R. Searle, *The Campus War* (1971); and, especially, Sidney Hook, "The Academic Ethic in Abeyance: Recollections of *Walpurgisnacht* at New York University", *Minerva* (ed. Edward Shils, Autumn/Winter 1984), and ch. 33 in his autobiography, *Out of Step* (1987).

In ENCOUNTER two articles span the decades: Robert Nisbet, "Who Killed the Student Revolution?" (February 1970), and Peter Collier/David Horowitz, "Who Killed the Spirit of '68?" (September-October 1985).

7. The Psychology of Apology



STILL AND ALL, something had undeniably changed, giving way to a vaporous mood if not a coherent idea, to a chastened attitude if not a clear concept. Hundreds of veterans of "the movement"

in both Europe and America were interviewed by Ronald Fraser for his "oral history" of 1968, and here are a few fragments from some of the representative cast of characters which typify the forlorn explanations of dismal failure.⁹

"... We really thought we were getting somewhere then [in America] though in the end we didn't. . . ."

"... the spirit of serving the people—it's a good way of reworking one's bourgeois [French] individuality and struggling against egoism. I still look back with nostalgia on those times. . . ."

"... We now had to admit what we, in our anti-authoritarian days, had so peremptorily demanded that our [German] parents admit: that they—like us—had devoted years of their life to a bad cause, that our well-intentioned revolutionary enthusiasm had got bogged down in a backward and undemocratic process. . . ."

"... I felt I'd given my life for a cause that no longer had any point. Everything was so black that I wanted to kill myself . . . everything that had made my life worth while had collapsed. . . ."

At moments, the despair developed into something of an explanation on the lines of ignorance-is-an-excuse:

"... There was no maturity, too little understanding of tradition. We thought we could make time begin now, that we could wilfully ignore history. . . . Nobody read any books. We had no scholarship, no guidance."

This piece of American modesty supplements the more pompous retrospection of Bernd Rabehl, one of the German student leaders:

"... We weren't prepared for the role we had to play in 1968. We didn't know enough, weren't radical enough. We politicised a situation but had no perspectives on how to carry it further. And after '68 we fell back into traditional politics, traditional ways of thinking."

This is typical of the slips, evasions, and *non sequiturs* of the generation who comforted themselves that they had been asking the right questions, even if they hadn't been coming up with the right answers. Why, if a radical didn't "know enough", should he want to resort to even more radicalism? What is wrong, if so-called new perspectives are non-existent, in turning to more traditional ways of change, amelioration, of defending the peace and expanding human rights?

No, there never was a chance for the coming of the apocalypse now. Many of their teachers tried to warn them¹⁰—

among the more prominent prophets: Raymond Aron, Sidney Hook, Edward Shils, Golo Mann, Erwin K. Scheuch, Hugh Trevor-Roper, Maurice Cranston, Irving Kristol, S. M. Lipset, Lewis Feuer, Robert Nisbet . . . university professors all—that it was folly for self-styled revolutionaries to dedicate themselves to a “Pseudo-Revolution”. Nowhere in the West was there a plausible classical “revolutionary situation”. There was no immiserated proletariat being paid hunger-wages, no restless middle class impatient with feudal aristocratic restrictions, no dispossessed masses trembling under a tyrant’s terror. Most people in the West, in Prime Minister Harold Macmillan’s ‘60s phrase, had “never had it so good” (and were to have it even better).

This reality, as true then as now, is masked by the self-deception of the post-’68 chroniclers, eager to play up the hard-hearted repression of the day. The Establishments are still the villains of the piece: ruthless in their use of force; exploitative in their absorption (and defusing) of innovative ideas and ideals in a quick legislative fix; malicious in their propaganda that the rebels were mad, decadent, subversive, corrupt, or generally amoral.

An historian like David Caute is desperate to save what he can from the dismal record of an uprising that never rose, a revolt that soon proved revolting. With more sentimentality than sense, he argues (and, in a long book of 500 pages, nowhere proves) that:

“the innovative ideas of the New Left—frequently, though not invariably, expressed with clarity and sophistication—constitute a treasury whose present dilapidation impoverishes us. . . .”¹¹

He sets out by asking relevant and provocative questions, appropriate to a sometime Oxford Fellow of All Souls,¹² but the alternatives he poses are too disagreeable for him to conclude with straight answers. Bent by nostalgia for and distorted by gratitude to the ‘60s for the transporting memories of hope and commitment, he avoids—not unlike Ronald Fraser who also promised (and failed to provide) a book-length “collective reassessment of the period”¹³—coming down hard on old causes and comrades.

“What were they—courageous visionaries or romantic utopians? Genuine revolutionaries or posturing spoiled brats? An authentic resistance movement or a frivolous carnival by kids who had never known poverty and the fear of unemployment? An idealistic challenge to imperialism or a pantomime of rhetorical gestures? A rebirth of the critical intelligence or a long, drugged ‘trip’ into fashionable incoherence? This book aims to provide a history that will yield tentative answers to these questions.”

¹¹ *The Year of the Barricades: A Journey Through 1968*. By DAVID CAUTE. Harper & Row, \$24.95, Hamish Hamilton, £14.95.

¹² See, in *ENCOUNTER* (March 1966), David Caute’s “Crisis in All Souls”.

¹³ Ronald Fraser, *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt*, p. 6. Fraser, for all his analytical deficits, is useful as an exercise in “oral history”, recording hundreds of interviews—if without sufficient attention to “the omissions and repressions of memory”. He merely observes that they “are themselves significant. . . .”

Tentative they are, to the point of prevarication. Lacking the courage to come out for the nice series of agreeable first theses (and many of the unattractive events he records would in any case stay his hand), Caute evades the nasty set of the second indictments (obviously that would be playing the game of “capitalist culture”). He needs to carve out a little bit of political space on which to stand: ground from which to mount yet another New Left; space to dream of imagination making another attempt to seize power. After all, the enemy is still out there, entrenched. In the last lines of his book Caute goes out where he came in all those years ago, protesting against:

“. . . this constant cultural neutering of dissent, the eclecticism which treats all ideas as short-lived merchandise . . . the triumph of the profit motive and the idolization of market forces in the era of Reagan and Thatcher.”

Come back, all ye ‘68ers! come back Dutschke and Cohn-Bendit and Mario Savio! the good old cause hath still need of thee. . . !

8. The Élan & the Ecstasy

IN SOME RESPECTS the “oral history” of ‘68 amounts to a recorded wasteland of disappointment and dejection. Not unnaturally (as Fraser notes), “the utopianism expressed in the slogan ‘We Want Everything’, the joyful egalitarianism and the sheer folly that sometimes accompanied it, is rarely expressed.” But what he means by the next phrase—“nor in many cases are the connections between personal and public life”—remains unexplained, although obviously it remains crucial for an objective historical “assessment”.

What, in the public and private lives of the ‘68ers, turned on the turbulent emotions and bodily rage? The anxiety of going to war? The new-found hedonism of sexual liberation? The glandular releases of “acid trips”? The tribal signals (as among the “Woodstock Nation”) of an up-beat collectivism? The ardent rediscovery of a lost ideology of utopia and revolution? The bewitchment of a half-educated teen-aged population with what has been called “antinomian” (Edward Shils) or “Pelagian” (Anthony Burgess) fantasies of truth, justice, and love? The histrionic impetus of a narcissistic TV-bred youth, scheming for the excitement of seeing themselves in living colour on the 6 o’clock news?

There are enough fundamental factors here to be getting on with—but historians tend to pick and choose among the motives and incentives: playing up the *élan* of ideals and ideology and playing down the bacchanalia of sex; responding to even the noisiest of music carnivals but turning a blind eye to the ecstasies of the fix and the drag; retelling the drama of banner headlines and hand-held cameras in “riot situations” but ignoring the shabby tales of media manipulation.

Looking back, each pinpoints the onset of a paralysing and disenchanting sense of frustration and failure. But in its time the youthful dream of the late ‘60s (and early ‘70s)—more and more a nightmare of liberty-cum-license-cum-libido, with words and watchwords intended to come “out of the barrel

of a gun"—rolled on, apparently irresistibly contagious.

At the Goethe University in Frankfurt-am-Main, in some ways a more resourceful headquarters of ingenious revolutionary tactics and catch-phrases than Paris, they draped a gigantic banner across the library frieze:

"It is forbidden to forbid!"

"Invent a new life!"

"The more I make love, the more I make the revolution!"

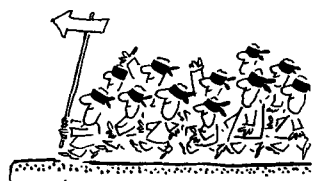
*"Mankind will only be happy when the last capitalist is hanged with the guts of the last bureaucrat!"*¹⁴

Power to the imagination? Between the climax of a grisly gallows ("the necessary murder", W. H. Auden had called it) and the orgasm of the great, happy-making love-in, the impossible dream has always exhausted itself.

Where they thought they were making an argument, they were only making gestures. Symbols were confounded with reality. Brandishing red flags and chanting sing-song expletives, they succeeded only in breaking taboos and never breaking into the precincts of power. State authority was being challenged, and brigades of young demonstrators were confronted on the streets and avenues by the main force of a tough police corps, increasingly trained and alert. (I recall one burly police chief patiently explaining to me the differences between go-ins and sit-ins, etc., and how, precisely, he would deal with each.) The paramilitary police columns in Berlin, Paris and London, as well as in Chicago and Tokyo, although at times hard-pressed, won every battle (except, possibly, the pyrrhic victory at Kent State)—resisting ram-paging rioters, expelling would-be occupiers and expropriators, counter-attacking with clubs, tear gas, and water-cannon.

Sons, as so often in the past, were revolting against fathers; the Oedipal psychodrama would be on the stage for only a brief season. They thought, in the words of the Bob Dylan song, that they knew where the wind was blowing, that "no weatherman was needed". Meteorology was not their strong point. They fingered the wind and were hit by a storm.

9. Causes, Real & Imaginary



I HAVE BEEN trying to follow over the last year or so the sometimes melancholy, sometimes grotesque meetings of the veterans—especially in Germany where the rich *Bundesrepublik* foundations have been persuaded to believe that if the original

movement was, after all, subsidised by the affluent society, then at least the remnants ought to be financially encouraged to get together and look each other in their moist eyes. In one such subsidised conference, reassembling yesterday's "heroes" (they referred to themselves, with light irony, as

"die gestrige Helden"), one could find only what one old Young-Socialist speaker termed paralysing unquiet.

"We still believe in socialism", one said. Another replied, "But I can't imagine how we could *ever* get into a revolutionary situation again—and then we *still* would not know what to do with it! . . ."

Five hundred filled a congress hall in Frankfurt for three dispiriting days. Professor Habermas paid a flying visit and left early. A speaker tried to argue that everybody is still being oppressed by "the structural violence of capitalism". Another cracked that we used to (like good militants) ask the relevant Leninist questions, "What is to be done?"; now (like patched-up petty-bourgeois) we only ask politely, "How do you do?" One chairperson confessed that she found it difficult to greet old friends with the salutation "*Genosse* [Comrade]" (but she said that she was happy to have been so free, once upon a time).

They all seemed to me to be futile reunions of regret and reconciliation. "We've interpreted the world", I heard somebody say, "and we've had it—what need to change it?" His neighbour commented, "Now we go in for jokes about Kohl rather than blows against Kapitalism. . . ."

THE LADS MAY HAVE LOST their way but they have not lost all of their brightness. Before I abandoned the trail I mustered enough curiosity to interview one couple who had struck me, 20 years ago, when I was making a documentary TV-film about the romantic rebels, as the living and loving embodiment of the permissive fusion of sex and insurrection. I put a question which might have been, in the old days, somewhat embarrassing, and possibly premature. Did they ever entertain the thought that they had made a mish-mash of the public and the private, confounding their youthful orgasmic potency with the ideological temptations of adolescent power lusts? (This is the way one asks serious questions in German.) He had been a *Theoretiker* in Frankfurt; she had been a tribune in Berlin; they tried to be together at every demonstration and festival. Oh no, he said; oh yes, she said; but they both conceded that they "live and fight differently these days" and that "we've declared our bedroom to be an agitprop-free-zone. . . ."

When I returned to London, with the mood of melancholy hanging about my ears, I listened to the radio concert of the return of "Fleetwood Mac", playing from the group's pop albums which were being sold in millions. The ensuing press discussion was similarly dispirited, depressed that rock music is no longer the voice of protest but the voice of money. A disenchanted English critic went on record as saying:

"What 'Fleetwood Mac' had done, along with other successful and ostentatiously rich bands—'The Eagles', 'Yes', 'Genesis', 'The Grateful Dead'—was to make rock an inverted form of what it had been. Instead of being a medium for expressing the anger and disrespect of poor urban youth, it became a medium of hedonism and acquiescence. . . . People wanted rock to be angry and young and vital again. . . ."

The concert is a success—clipped, breezy blues music that has been added to so much over the years that its ori-

¹⁴ I have made a rough translation from the German in Wilhelm Bittorf, *Die Wilden 68er* (Spiegel pamphlet, 1988), p. 38.

ginal point, which is to complain and whine about how miserable you are, has been quite forgotten."¹⁵

Hard times all over.

One suspected at the time that the ground swell was reformist and a small militant minority slipped into revolutionary violence. Indeed that is roughly the way it happened as the '60s gave way to the '70s when so many terrorist "groupuscules" reigned. But one truth should not be overlooked: that the illiberalism and the ruthlessness was implicit from the start. As Peter Schneider, who was one of the leading APO activists in Berlin, wrote in *Der Spiegel*:

"The idea of 'the Urban Guerrilla' and of 'the Armed Struggle' did not at all come from the brainstorm of a few isolated militants. It was something that was right from the beginning swimming around in the stream of notions and emotions of the '68 generation. . . ."

I think this was only to be expected when, dramatically in the '60s, a vacuum was created, and a whole section of the new generation of the post-War Western world found itself increasingly alienated, and to all intents and purposes seceded from conventional middle-class society. To be sure, it was certainly not the first time this had occurred. But it went far beyond earlier outbursts of romantic defection, even if it remained quite within the bounds of the analysis offered by, say, Max Weber. He spotted the early modern forms of the petty-bourgeois revulsion, in certain times and places, against living normal middle-class lives. There were defections to Youth movements, to Bohemias and Communes, all in full (if temporary) flight from humdrum daily routines, from an existence without any special heights or depths, which produced what German sociology called *die schwärmerische Suche nach Ausser-alltäglichkeit*, the longing for the unconventional. The old cultural protest forms now seemed to be exhausted: the run-away adventurers, the religious revivalists, the *Wandervogel*. Aesthetic subversion no longer had any point. In the first place the "bourgeois-decadent" world had lost all confidence in its established values; secondly, it accordingly accepted and absorbed all sorts of dissidence and deviance.

THUS, THE DRIVE to the new unconventionality, to sensations and happenings which enjoy a brief notoriety, becomes a spinning thing of perpetual motion. Styles follow each other in rapid succession, stunts displace tricks, scandals replace rumours and gossip. Happenings have to happen. Even when they were in prison, the hyperactive RAF members of the Baader-Meinhof gang had to produce some bits of news which made a headline every other day: going on hunger strike, wrestling with their guards, destroying their neatly-furnished cells, smuggling out messages and orders, produ-

¹⁵ William Leith, "Rock of Wages", in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 29 May 1988.

¹⁶ In an unpublished paper Dr Helmut Fogt, "*Zwischen Aktivismus und Resignation: Karrieren von APO-Aktivisten 1968-1988*", to which Erwin K. Scheuch kindly called my attention. I have benefited also from Professor Scheuch's own paper, "*Die Überbau-Revolution*" (1988).

cing prison literature, propagandising inmates, in the end doing away with themselves. . . .

What would happen when the enthusiasm waned, when the broad mass of rebellious youth, now well over the fateful tumescent threshold of 30, returned to the rhythms of the hated "normal life", with routines that were no less humdrum and unexciting? A surprising political paradox emerged. On the street there were no longer dancing feet; but minds and hearts evidently underwent little fundamental change. The old radical élite was now well-fed, well-housed, well-clad—for the movement was nothing so much as an "old boy network" which German observers call a *Seilschaft* (a mountain-climbing image), scheming to get jobs for the like-minded. Those researchers who have tracked down hundreds of '68ers in their new careers found them surprisingly fixed in their old attitudes and prejudices (minus a slogan or two and a bit of their adolescent utopianism). One sociologist has written: "Contrary to many expectations, one can detect in the West German leaders of the APO-era [1967-8] very little of an 'ageing of views' towards moderate positions and standpoints. . . ."¹⁶

HOWEVER, THIS TIME AROUND, the Western Establishments have no reason for alarm, given the mediocrity of the historical apologies coupled with the indifference and disbelief of the new young generation—students only born in the 1960s. Immoderation in private does not necessarily lead to public turbulence; the volcano looks inactive, even looks dead. For the foreseeable future neither ideology nor post-hard-rock nor erotica nor speed and crack, and not even a nihilistic media starved of photogenic camera-ready sensations, will work to induce yet another round of revolutionary utopianism. Reason may nod but can hardly fall so deeply asleep as to breed little monsters again.

Nor does the memory of '68 find favour with current would-be subversive spirits. Recently a leading radical young-columnist, famed for her anti-Americanism and general *gauchisme*, exploded against the "obsession with the ignoble year of 1968"; and she can be cited for the current mood of looking back in anger at what she calls "the most self-satisfied, self-dramatising and non-achieving generation ever to walk the earth. . . ." Reviewing the televised archive scraps and chat-shows of "the Crass of '68", she fulminated:

"All that happened was a series of televised clashes with the police, something any gang of hooligans can muster on any Bank Holiday. That the spectacle reached its pitch in France—the most histrionic and militarily useless country on earth—is no coincidence. . . .

The Sixties generation was the only one this century not to risk its lives for its beliefs. Given a gun or a megaphone, it would take the latter every time. So 1968 was a media event from which . . . the Left never recovered, mistaking self-indulgence for freedom, incoherence for spontaneity, and fantasy for idealism. . . .

How fitting that this most self-regarding and globally inactive of generations should have their finest hour boiled

down to an evening of TV, perfect viewing over a Vietnamese takeaway, with a side dish of self-pity.”¹⁷

No such flippancy obtains on the Continent; and drastic moods, even such as I have described them, never fail to be ambivalent in Germany. On the one hand, the chiliastic revival is dead, over and done with. And Professor Erwin Scheuch who once wrote a book about “the Anabaptists of the Affluent Society” is convinced that, sociologically, the real significance of it all was the *Seilschaft*, climbers roped to each other and mutually supportive. For many thousands between Bonn and Berkeley, it was, in the end, a short cut to influence and jobs. When one looks about one in the world of media pundits, young professors, political staffers, local government bureaucracy, etc., it was a quiet climb to the top. The romantic revolt had pragmatic results, actually paid dividends. It gave a jolting impetus to what Pareto called “the circulation of the élite”. On the other hand, if this is so, we have to acknowledge that “the long march through the institutions” may actually be on its way, only it would be taking a little longer.

Thus the ambiguity: if the Movement was a failure, why does it look so successful? German academics as diverse as Erwin Scheuch and Ralf Dahrendorf (who was in Brussels as Europe’s Education Commissioner at the outset of the ’60s, in London as head of the occasionally beleaguered LSE at the end) argue alternatively both sides of the question. According to Dahrendorf,¹⁸ at the heart of the aspirations of ’68 was a hope, and despite everything it remains . . . hopeful. According to Scheuch, the revolution was based on an ideological falsification, and when the myth evaporated, the real achievement was the social security of advance elements of a new élite class. The fringes of ’68 withered away. Energetic and unbroken young men and women at the centre found notable “careers open to talents”.

10. Reunions Galore

ON THE SUBJECT of talented careerists I turn to Tom Hayden, a prominent American ’68er who is now a Californian Assemblyman and is said to have an eye on higher things. He was in the news the other day, promoting his new book *Reunion* (which “reflects the radical’s pride in prescient acts of conscience”) and, for the rest, trying to make a first effort at “genuine contrition”. He confesses that:

“ . . . it took me quite a while to simply say that the system works. It was very difficult. Many ’60s radicals have

not been able to make that bridge. It’s heresy for them.”

International Herald Tribune, 14 July 1988

Not that it was, for him, some kind of pilgrim’s progress; he told the *Washington Post* reporter that “I feel now much more like I did when I was 21 than at any other part of my life”—and at 21, as is well-known, it is bliss to be alive, even if all the post-adolescent difficulties still lie ahead.

In a similar vein, mixing evasiveness and superficiality, the film star Jane Fonda (Hayden’s wife) tried, in another press conference, to phrase a few words of apology for some aspects of her role in the Viet Nam protests.¹⁹ She confessed that her actions in visiting Hanoi (in 1972) were “thoughtless and careless”; she had broadcast appeals to the men on the US aircraft carriers, warning them that using their bombs “make one a war criminal”. What incensed many GI veterans was the fact that she was encouraging the troops to disobey orders. An expert in aerobics, Jane Fonda is a practised contortionist; and in “revising” her views she didn’t quite say that supporting the Ho Chi Minh régime and rallying support for a revolutionary victory in South-east Asia was wrong, having brought her to the fringes of moral responsibility for criminal excesses (the murder and expulsion of millions in the “Boat People” and Pol Pot aftermath).

Thus, millions of ageing ’68ers, in a dozen lands, try to glow with memory, and thousands have written or recited their remembrance of things past. But there was, almost without exception, no analysis and no insight, certainly no mature interpretation of real historical causes and long-term social consequences. The atmosphere, even after 20 years, is accordingly choked with the same voluble rhetoric—the first time, grandiloquent; the second, pedestrian—which accompanied the original outbursts. It is a phenomenon akin to what Nietzsche once called “the error of imaginary causes”, namely (in *Götzen-Dämmerung*, 1889):

“ . . . to start from the dream: and on to a certain sensation, the result for example of a distant cannon-shot, a cause is subsequently foisted (often a whole little novel in which precisely the dreamer is the chief character). The sensation, meanwhile, continues to persist, as a kind of resonance. . . . ”²⁰

What I have been trying to suggest is that from the Movement’s raw base of exuberant experiences, there was (to speak with Nietzsche again) no “sublimation”—not even a wise regret, or a noble remorse, or any kind of higher self-knowledge. It remained a decadent emotion of command (“*Do it!*”), short-lived and wasteful of its own elements of vivacity.

“Most of our general feelings—every kind of inhibition, pressure, tension, each explosion in the play and counter-play of our organs, likewise and especially the condition of the *nervus sympathicus*—excite our cause-creating drive: we want to have a reason for feeling as we do. . . . Thus, there arises an habituation to a certain causal interpretation which in truth obstructs and even prohibits an investigation of the cause.”

See: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke* (ed. Schlechta), vol. II, p. 974. I have used the translation of R. J. Hollingdale, in the Penguin edition of *Twilight of the Idols*, pp. 50-1, and of Walter Kaufmann in his *Portable Nietzsche* (1954), pp. 496-7.

¹⁷ Julie Burchill, “Gutless Look at the Crass of ’68”, in *The Mail on Sunday*, 1 May 1988, p. 20.

¹⁸ For the views of Professor Ralf Dahrendorf, see his article on “the revolution that never took place” in *Die Zeit* (Hamburg), 13 May 1988, p. 3.

¹⁹ “Fonda Says She’s Sorry”, in the *International Herald Tribune*, 18-19 July 1988.

²⁰ Nietzsche adds, by way of additional explanation—after what was engendered by a certain condition has been misunderstood as the cause of that condition—how “meaning” fails to emerge.

Even the passing phrases, once freshly minted and then debased in general circulation, are hard to get away from. "Swinging London" was the coin and conceit of an entire generation after *Time* Magazine had published its historic cover-story on 15 April 1966, brilliantly written by Horace F. Judson (then *Time*'s correspondent in London).²¹ He had interviewed me on the subject and happened to quote some of my off-hand remarks. I recall only referring to the rather stolid, conservative bloc of traditional English culture, qualified by a small "swinging" sector (a Mayfair discothèque between a Soho pub and a Chelsea boutique). Thereafter, "swinging London" was occasionally attributed to me, and its rather obscure source has even served as the "right answer" to a "hard question" in a BBC radio-quiz programme.

TWENTY YEARS LATER the perceptions have "swung" in another direction. A *Times* headline (London, 25 July 1988) announced:

LIBERATED EIGHTIES EXPLODE THE MYTH
OF SWINGING SIXTIES

The story summarised a sociological report from the British "Family Policy Studies Centre" demonstrating that, in terms of male-female relationships, the 1980s were much more "liberated", and that "the image of the 1960s as an era of the 'permissive society' seems greatly distorted. . . ." A statistical comparison of marriages, divorces, illegitimate births, etc., then and now, gave the impression that (in the words of Jonathon Green) "the Eighties are in fact infinitely more permissive than the staid old Sixties. . . ." Green is the author of yet another "oral history"—*Days in the Life*—and he goes on to note:

"Where are they now, all those happy hedonists with their plans to change the world? Interviewing some 110 of them . . . I found that they'd moved on—but, on the whole, not very far from their Sixties cells. Above all, they have no regrets. It's amazing how many are dancing to similar tunes, albeit dressed up in more recent finery and dealing in more pragmatic materialism. . . ."²²

As so often in modern history, contemporaries rarely come away with a real sense of the essential moving forces of their epoch or era, or (as it is now commonly reckoned) their decade. Caught up as they are in a new "climate of opinion" with its winds of change, they flatter themselves in thinking that they move events when they themselves are being moved. Theirs is a romanticised drama wherein they play the protagonists. They pick up their cues, even at times improvise some notable lines, but have no idea of the name of the play and how it is going to end. In the so-called theatre of revolution there are no certain schedules between premières and revivals, and short runs are the norm.

²¹ See Angus McGill "In Search of the Swinging Sixties Spirit", in the *London Evening Standard*, 2 July 1980, pp. 22-23.

²² Jonathon Green, "Will the Sixties Ever End?", *London Evening Standard* (1 August 1988); *Family Policy Bulletin* No. 5 (London, 1988). *Days in the Life*. Heinemann, £14.95.

11. Sentimental Journey



DEBUT D'UNE
LUTTE
PROLONGÉE

CAPABLE OF RISING only to the heights of nostalgia and sentimental reminiscence, the generation of the 1960s has not—possibly I should say, not yet—reported critically on its experience. It could well be that it never will. It could be that a movement which dedicated itself to emotions and vibrations, to spontaneity and irrationality—"What if we are illogical?" said one of the '68 spokesmen, "What's so important about logic?"—will be the first in our Western cultural history which doesn't follow the hitherto natural course of reflection, recon-

sideration, and revision.

This final melancholy thought was promoted by the several dozen articles, films, and television interviews that were recently devoted to "twenty years after, *right on!*" Like sentimental Ivy League alumni in a Marquand novel, or swaggering student princes in a Heidelberg operetta, all the prominent protagonists of 1968 were commissioned to hold reunions, to visit the old precincts where they had left their youth, to wallow in the fading memories of heroic days. On both sides of the Atlantic, the TV documentary-makers compiled old newsreels of the tumultuous scenes in Harvard and Berkeley, in the Sorbonne and the London School of Economics, in the Auditorium Maximum of West Berlin's Free University, in Rome, Vienna, and Amsterdam—occasionally spiced by clips from Tokyo of those medieval Kurosawa-like clashes of red-masked students and white-helmeted Japanese police going through their ritualistic war dances of law and disorder.

Briefly famous faces were seen marching, haranguing, flushed with fiery victories over deans, professors, rectors and, occasionally, "the pigs, bulls, and flics". One television critic, exposed to all this, coolly referred to "that old icon of the late '60s, 'load-a-slogans', a serious role-model now largely taken as a satirical invention". One listened to rationalisations by corpulent prophets of the "property-is-theft" persuasion, 20 years after, explaining away the Volvos parked in front of their town-houses, their dapper suits and natty ties, their very temporary compromises with middle-class affluence until the vision and the vibes come again. All the erstwhile revolutionaries had aged, had grown old ere their prime. They were seen on all the talk shows "politely passing the jargon from right to left around the table".

One teenager, sitting in at a meeting of '68 veterans, was heard to wail, with notable unoriginality, that he (woe unto him) was a member of "the lost generation": "too young to be a hippy, too old to be a punk. . . ."

But back to the golden myth and its protagonist—a sunny *poil de carotte* in Paris, leading his young band of brothers in the good fight for virtue and felicity. Daniel Cohn-Bendit was possibly the most celebrated and charismatic figure of them all, and he treated himself to a long holiday from his kinder-

garten work among Frankfurt-am-Main children and from his "green" campaign to save nature in the Rhineland. He set off for a trip around the world, financed by his publishers and a network of TV studios, to see and reminisce with the old comrades who had been famous for Warhol's fifteen minutes (or fifteen months), and thereafter slipped away from the front-page headlines forever.

Danny still had his shock of red hair, a mischievous grin, and the old gift of the gab that mixed grave gesture with sheer light-headedness. He was not a man of ideas, then or now. Seen in the perspective of 20 years, his holding hands in demonstrations and jumping up on and down from tables and statues (for the cameras) had more in common with a Maypole frolic than May Day Marxism. Now he admits that Charlie Chaplin was his hero. Now he concedes that he had a personal, chronic thirst for publicity, and says frankly, "I need it—it's a mixture of political vocation and narcissism. Thirty photographers!—that's power!" This comes closer to an idea—if only about himself, not about society or history or high politics—than he has ever had.

Let us take, then, a closer look at the evidence disclosed by his round-the-world film series and the accompanying book. *Nous l'avons tant aimée la révolution* (roughly: Oh, how we loved the revolution). It will provide a final retrospective on the currents, then and now, which characterised the spirit and the soul of those strange events that are called in French, with revealing simplicity, *les événements*.²³

One senses in all these continental Europeans a feeling of grievous transatlantic loss. It probably has less to do with Henry James than Janis Joplin. Once the Americans had been the greatest inspiration, now they were the most dismal disappointment. The young rebels in the United States had put the act together, and they had it made—a war of their own to protest at (how could the German and English kids get so excited about GIs in Viet Nam?); a horrid race problem with real injustices; a musical accompaniment in the form of the Bob Dylans and the Joan Baezes, whose back-up served to arouse the savage breast; a Hemingwayesque directness of language, which raised obscenities to the peaks of revolutionary rhetoric; a Wild-West irresponsibility that permitted one to shoot from the hip (if, mostly, with syringes) and dance and prance nude all weekend at Woodstock festivals.

But what had happened to the enviable and admirable American heroes? Cohn-Bendit met up with Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin. The years had exacted their price. Abbie confesses that he is no longer a full-time activist; the alterna-

tive culture is no more; the hippies just want to be left alone; the young under thirty (and nobody else could be trusted) just didn't turn out to be the revolutionary class history had been waiting for.

Yet no one could take the past away from them. Abbie reassured Danny that, if the Abbie and Jerry show is no longer running, "Woodstock remains one of the fundamental cultural events of the time", in a class with Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. Danny takes his message sadly: "I have become another person. . . . I have turned into a normal citizen. . . . As for Jerry, we are a 'divorced' couple."

It was worse than that. Not only had Cohn-Bendit's old gang broken up, but each accused the other of betrayal, of fascism, of disloyalty to the spirit of '68. "Do it!" was the slogan Jerry Rubin once made famous. Now the question was: do what? Live in a luxury apartment and give up the battle against the Establishment? Danny tried to make a feeble joke: "From Yippie to Yuppie?" Jerry answers from newfound latterday strength, reinforced by his special health-food diet and its vitamin-popping regimen (ca. 40-50 pills a day, to head off heart disease, cancer, and the like).

"What you don't understand, Danny, is that we were the victors in the '60s! We won! Now we have to go on." Cohn-Bendit, troubled by Grenada and agitated by Nicaragua, is itching to go on; but he can't count on Abbie and Jerry.

Could he have been mistaken in his white American comrades? What of the blacks, his co-fighters in the campaign to free Bobby Seale? In Philadelphia he finds Seale, who reassures him that though he is older, he is still a revolutionary who is patiently biding his time to call once more for taking up arms in the violent struggle. A new time for the Black Panthers would surely come. But meanwhile he would be writing a new cookbook on hickory barbecues (a technique learned from his uncle in Texas) and, like Jane Fonda, trying to sell a quarter-million cassettes. What would he do with all that money? He would establish a foundation to support cells for social change.

WERE THE EUROPEANS any more steadfast? Cohn-Bendit finds the organiser of his historic Amsterdam sit-ins to be the same old *Provo* as in the good old days. Roel van Duyn outlines his White-pigs plan to change the police force into social workers. His White-queen dream is to convert the royal palace into a city hall for the people; his White-city proposition is to abolish all machines and work from the capital and turn Amsterdam toward creativity. Cohn-Bendit is mightily impressed by the innovativeness, the fantasy, the idealism, and only a little troubled

²³ Daniel Cohn-Bendit, *Nous l'avons tant aimée la révolution* (Paris, 1986); *Wir haben sie so geliebt, die Revolution* (Frankfurt, 1987).



by the eccentric signs of mysticism. Van Duyn, 20 years on, talks to the trees, but he couldn't find the one in Amsterdam Park with which he just had a most interesting dialogue. He was so sorry, but it was just here.

Could it be that the petit-bourgeois defects in these middle-class radicals were the source of the disorientation of two decades? Cohn-Bendit turns to "the sons of the proletariat", the heroic agents designed by Marx as the carriers of the revolution. Student power advocates had wanted to embrace them in a truly working-class uprising.

With Jean-Pierre Duteuil, he tries to warm up the old dream of anarchism and libertarianism. But his old friend, Michel Chemin, the militant in the Renault factory with whom he had unfurled red flags, is no longer convinced that the proletariat as such still exists. Good thing, too. He confesses that in all the years of strike-organising militance, moving from factory to factory, he tried to "repress in myself the violence which would make one a fascist, a man who would kill other human beings. . . . For fifteen years I lived with one idea: to strangle the boss." Murder was no longer in his heart. He had set up a little business for himself, working on his own. "I'm now also a boss."

Cohn-Bendit persisted, but found the Germans no better than the French, and the Italians worst of all. Much guile and influence was used to get Cohn-Bendit into the prison cells where Valerio Morucci and Adriana Farrando were serving sentences of four times life and thirty years, respectively, for their roles in the murder of Aldo Moro. Behind bars, Farrando comes to the conclusion that her adolescent notions of society were too mechanical and that, really, "everything is

more flexible, less determined, more open than we thought". Morucci opines, in an inspired lexical moment, that his old notion of revolution was meaningless and empty, for it was a concept developed out of machinery, then transferred to politics by way of astronomy.²⁴

A LAST VIGNETTE, before the '68 revolution's own Charlie tramps down the road into the sunset. The terrorists were proving to be a puzzlement to him. Kids can get confused; students can tire of words; go-getters can become opportunistic—but what of the stalwart young men with smoking guns in their hands, who had fired for the "terrible beauty" of the revolutionary cause?

Here was one '68 gunman, now convinced that he had wasted and ruined his life, looking back on the seductive days when he worked with the notorious Carlos, the great assassin of the '60 and '70s. "What was fascinating about him? . . . His ingenuity, his collection of weapons combined with his taste for luxury, his ability to speak in six languages, his knowledge of world politics, his house full of bombs and explosive devices! For me he was a terrorist gentleman . . . a revolutionary James Bond."

And here is another, Fernando Gabera, the Brazilian *guerillero*, whom Cohn-Bendit asked about the American ambassador (C. Burke Elbrick), the one who had been kidnapped and was about to be shot. Could he have pulled the trigger? Yes, of course, he could have. A line came running through his head, maybe it was from a film (*Viva Maria!*?²⁵), maybe it was from Régis Debray, whom he had read (and who had read Sartre). "Forgive me, I must kill you . . . in order to prove to you that I love you."

WERE THESE, THEN, the sources of the ideas that inspired the turbulence of 1968 and infatuated a whole post-War generation throughout half the world? Was it a book or a song or a film, a dog-eared pamphlet from a militant's library, or a wayward anecdote from a professor with a penchant for punch lines? Words and images, vaguely and uneasily related to ideas and ideals, have often in history been known to form, in their "tragical-comical" way, a great chain of human folly.

Crossings

In hospital with the National Health, I see
A newspaper obituary for J. W. ("Jack")
Martin, Kent and England, easily our most
Impressive sporting Old Boy; and I'm intrigued
To find it's by Roy Fuller, friend from another
Sphere altogether. My south-east London school
Had just two famous sons, J. W.
Martin and Lord (John) Vaizey; though far back,
In the 1920s, Montague Summers taught there:
"A fine, distinguished man", one master said,
Not gauging the sum of his reputation.

I see Jack Martin up at Whitefoot Lane,
The school sports ground, position a sly Point
Four feet from the 1st XI Captain
During Old Boys v. School; and duly bounce
First ball of the over blithely, easily
From pitch to bat to hand. Silenced, I stand
At the Debating Society that same week,
Thinking to make a case against the public
Funding of medicine, as left-wing Vaizey
Rises up blithely from the floor to place
A vigilant Point of Information. . . .

Alan Brownjohn

²⁴ For an historical account of the peculiar astronomical (and astrological) contexts of the metaphors of "revolution", see the chapters on "The Birth of a Metaphor", in Melvin J. Lasky, *Utopia and Revolution* (1976), pp. 218-259.

²⁵ In a memoir of '68, the widow of Rudi Dutschke recalled that *Viva Maria!*—the film with Jeanne Moreau and Brigitte Bardot about the Mexican Revolution of 1910 (Madero, Zapata, Pancho Villa *et al.*)—was a favourite of Rudi's, and that he went to see it over and over again ("at least five times, if not more").

Dutschke usually, as Gretchen Klotz-Dutschke reported, fell asleep in the cinema, "but not at *Viva Maria!*" See Wilhelm Bittorf, in *Die wilden 68er* (*Spiegel* pamphlet, 1988), p. 16.

Aileen Ireland

Paukenmesse

AS HE WALKED, Pavel Gheorghiou, clerk in the Ministry of the Interior, noticed the direction his feet were taking with a sort of resentment. Evidently he was going to the Easter service. The wind was fresh and he was tempted to quicken his step but he would not. His mind could refuse to go there and his body would obey, he knew, yet the stubborn pace continued in the same direction.

The explanation could have been that some remnants of piety still clung to him—at this season in particular—but it was not so; he had shrugged off those habits without difficulty years before. One would have thought it true of everyone after all those years dividing the old régime from the new, after the war and all that had happened since. Yet today the streets were filled with streams of people moving towards the churches. Ten years ago it would have been unthinkable. Today, it was as if those years had not been.

He was facing the cathedral now from across the street. Humanity flowed from its doors, spilled over and collected in pools on the pavements. He moved closer and worked his way round to the side-door. The notes of the *Kyrie* floated out to him and he realised how long his reluctance had taken to bring him here. Even now he was unwilling to go in. An old woman blocked his way asking for money. There were others like her in the doorway, old men, too, and children. He pushed his way through the crowd and fought past those on the stairs, running up the last flight to the choir loft.

Alfred Héderváry glanced at him as he made his way over to the basses. It was stiflingly hot and cramped as he eased into his place. Alfred's attention was on the soloist. She was wobbling a bit with nervousness but her tone was good enough. Some of the choir were fanning themselves with their music sheets, others squeezed out to the gallery at the top of the stairs for a breath of air. Or something more like air.

The priest moved to the other side of the altar. Pavel stared at the conductor. The solo finished, Alfred was wiping his face and neck with a handkerchief. He didn't look like a hero.

Gloria, gloria. . .

His thinning hair stood out bushily at the sides of a balding crown. His round face was pink and shining with warmth and exertion, the amiable features exhilarated. He was a man who could withstand weeks of

torture and solitude. And now he was bending all his energy into turning a ragged bunch of singers into a choir, capable of performing Haydn's Mass, the *Missa in Tempore Belli*, before a large public without sacrificing it or making themselves ridiculous. He was obviously happy. The pace quickened, became lyrical.

Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. . .

Pavel joined his full round baritone with the rest. Even among the basses, rock-steady in pitch, he provided an anchor for the other parts. There was much less wavering around the note when he was there. Alfred's expression of satisfaction deepened.

Suscipe, suscipe deprecationem nostram. . .

AGAIN the resentment rose. He wanted to walk away; he wanted Héderváry to make a fatal slip, to go back to the ordeal and be broken this time. He wanted to be rid of him. For ten years the man had dogged him.

"*Quoniam tu solus sanctus. Tu solus Dominus*" burst forth. The tears sprang to his eyes. He shook his head against sudden emotion, against the intolerable position he was in. At the end of that section, Simone caught his eye. She indicated that she wanted to speak to him afterwards. Of all this motley collection she irritated him the most. She was crazy anyway. There hadn't ever been more than one or two useful tit-bits among all the trivialities she fed him after every choir practice. She told them all as if they were deadly secrets, still labouring under some sort of delusion of grandeur. It had been stripped away—every last trace of it. All that was left was an ageing silly woman, with dyed hair. Perhaps she had a new and awful setting for *Ave Maria* to add to his pile of her unrelenting compositions. Another frightful watercolour? Or perhaps the cat had died at last? Why couldn't she keep her confidences for Alfred? She's so mixed up she thinks I'm one of the dispossessed because I wear better clothes! The thought gave him a second's genuine amusement. He gave her a brief nod.

Et homo factus est. . .

Other men were being watched even now. He had worked his way into favour by pointing them out. Put-

ting the finger on them, rather. Digging something up against them. There was always something. He had put self-respect and dignity aside and, in so doing, made himself pleasing to his masters. He knew that Héderváry was worth watching. He had been watching him involuntarily for months.

The secret camps in the reedy expanses of the Delta had gone, and the barbed wire, and the watch-towers. . . .

Sub Pontio Pilatus, passus, passus. . . .

IN PRISON, they made him undress, leaving him only his shirt. His feet were bare on the concrete floor. The voice said, "You have been condemned by history. Whatever means we may employ in protecting the victory of the working class are justified. Sooner or later—whether willingly or unwillingly—you will confess everything you know."

They brought Alfred back after beating him and beating him, after keeping him in a dark cell for days on end. He told how he had screamed for mercy, and snivelled like a child. One time, after a prisoner tried to choke him out of his bread ration, Alfred had clawed and kicked himself free, and then turned and given it to the man saying, "Why did you do that? You could have asked me for it." No one understood him there.

Pavel couldn't understand him either. He closed his eyes to force blankness into his mind, concentrating, to dispel the sickness.

Et iterum venturus est, cum gloria, judicare vivos et mortuos, cujus regnit non erit finis. . . .

His voice joined the others' as the *Credo* moved towards a crescendo of unity. The bluebottle had done for him. The creature would not die. For days it had blundered against the walls, out of reach in the darkness, and droned, and buzzed sharply when he managed to hit his hand against it in the air. He had willed it to die for days until he exploded in a frenzy of hate and beat his hands against the walls. But he could not catch it, and he told them everything he knew.

Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum. . . .

When you no longer believe in what you are doing, it is very easy to be successful. During the last years he had had more comforts, more friends, and more respect than he had ever known. Ten years after

prison, Héderváry's eyes had met his across a counter.

Incredulously, Pavel had watched him measure out the oil, and taken the tins of beans and mushrooms from his hands. Alfred had asked him to come and sing as he took the money. The long queue had spared them from talking much. Now he was singing. He watched himself singing for Alfred. He listened to his own voice, still resonant, still giving a foundation to that group. The sound of the timpani still resonated, like thunder, in his ears. Good God what am I doing here? I hate him! I would hand him over *tomorrow*. His hands nearly crushed the sheets of music between them. The blankness came at last.

Qui tollis peccata mundi. . . .

He sang the drawn-out conclusion with self-possession, with irony. "*Dona nobis pacem. . . . Pacem. . . .*" (It was over.) "*Pacem*". He turned with relief towards the door, pushing past the timpanist and then stopped.

Simone, with her confidential smile, was outside. In that instant, he recalled her telling him about being shaken out of sleep—more than twenty years before—by the secret police. They had taken her husband away and she had had no word, no crumb of information from that point on. Alive or dead? He moved slowly towards her. She whispered what she wanted to tell him, and he recoiled.

"He will be at the meeting tomorrow night . . . has put his signature to the . . .", putting her mouth, with its ragged application of paint, close to his ear. Rigidly, he bore the brunt of her proximity then waved her on down the stairs.

Could he put the finger on Héderváry through her? His instinct refused it. Yet after all his waiting, all that singing, something had come up at last. He wanted to follow her down. Go on, go on, you blockhead!

Still he lingered, his whole being indecisive. He turned back towards the choir, if only to shake the paralysis in his limbs. And Alfred disengaged himself from a couple of straggling contraltos and came towards him, holding his hands out. Numbed, Pavel felt Alfred embrace him, saw his hands in the other's being squeezed and pumped up and down.

"What would we have done without you?" He went on talking about the final section, taking Pavel's arm, moving down the stairs beside him while, dulled and glazed and sick, Pavel suffered himself to be guided on into the street, past the lingering Simone.

What unwitting fools we all are, he was thinking. It's enough to drive a man out of his mind.

Djilas on Gorbachov (II)

MILOVAN DJILAS & GEORGE URBAN in Conversation

1. The Fixed Addiction to Utopia



URBAN: You said in the first part of our conversation that Revolution must be "the last resort"? Would, then, the Soviet people have been justified to rise against the tyranny of Stalin?

DJILAS: Absolutely. From the moral point of view, a revolution to put down the monster Stalin would have been right and proper. Can you think of a *more* moral cause, with the sole exception of putting down the genocidal Hitler?

—Why, then, was there no organised opposition? Professor Sidney Hook, who has given this question probably more thought than any man alive, puts it poignantly (in his book *"Marxism and Beyond"*):

"Hitler's domestic régime was not as oppressive to the majority of his subjects as Stalin's was to the great mass of Soviet peasants and workers. Yet there were plots against Hitler and at least one failed effort. But there is no objective

evidence of any movement directed against Stalin. . . . Why no opposition despite the century-old traditions of revolutionary opposition to despotism?"

DJILAS: A good question, and I cannot provide a good answer. Stalin's despotism didn't coincide with the frustration and stagnation of the whole of Soviet society. The rapid pace of industrialisation, the cultural revolution and the spirit of dedication which had been inherited from Lenin, gave the Stalinist system a certain dynamism and coherence which would have made a revolution against Stalin impossible. The letter you quoted from *Pravda* (23 July 1987) is a fair sample of the spirit of the 1930s. Vasily Grossman's masterly novel *Life and Fate*¹ gives an almost Tolstoyesque account of the same phenomenon. Although an uneven book, it nevertheless catches those moments in Soviet history when the duality of Soviet life was at its most conspicuous: Stalin's Terror and the concentration camps on the one hand; and, on the other, an undoubtedly inspired and heroic national effort, first to industrialise backward Russia, and then to protect it during the War.

¹ Vasily Grossman, *Life and Fate* (1985). See also, the review article by Andrei Navrozov, "The View from Vnukovo" in *ENCOUNTER* (December 1986).

MILOVAN DJILAS was, until his fall from power in 1954, Vice-President of Yugoslavia, President of the Federal Parliament, and a Member of the Politburo and Central Committee. He was imprisoned under the Monarchy (1933-36), and under Tito (1956-61 and 1962-66). His publications include "The New Class" (1957), "Conversations with Stalin" (1962), "The Unperfect Society" (1969), "Tito: The Story From the Inside" (1981) and "Rise and Fall" (1985). He has published three volumes of autobiography, "Land without Justice" (1958), "Memoir of a Revolutionary" (1973), and "Wartime" (1977). Milovan Djilas lives as a freelance writer—uncensored, but occasionally harassed by the police—in Belgrade. The first part of this conversation appeared in the September-October *ENCOUNTER*.

GEORGE URBAN's contributions to *ENCOUNTER* include conversations with Vladimir Bukovsky (November 1987, January 1988), Alain Besançon (May and June 1987), Galina Vishnevskaya (December 1986, January 1987), Max M. Kampelman (February 1985), Alexander Zinoviev (April 1984), Jeane Kirkpatrick (November 1983), Eugene V. Rostow (April 1983), Daniel Bell (February 1983), W. Averell Harriman (November 1981), and Zbigniew Brzezinski (May 1981). His previous conversation with Milovan Djilas was published in the December 1979 issue of *ENCOUNTER*. "Djilas on Gorbachov" is available as a pamphlet (No. 18), £2.20 (\$3.50). "Can the Soviet System Survive Reform?", a collection of conversations with George Urban, will be published this autumn by John Spiers Ltd.

—*Would the Romanian people, on your showing, be morally justified to rise against the rule of the Ceaușescu clan?*

DJILAS: Absolutely. Ceaușescu's is a terrible and shameful dictatorship. It is heaping indignity upon the whole people; in an even tolerably just world it should not be allowed to exist.

—*You said that revolutions almost never achieve what they set out to achieve.*

DJILAS: Not quite. What I do say is that Communism as a system has shown itself to be completely unsuccessful, even though in some countries it may have accelerated the pace of popular education, industrialisation and modernisation. It is, therefore, wrong to make a revolution if a Communist system is going to be its direct or indirect result. In other instances it may not be morally wrong to make a revolution, but it is always wrong in terms of the suffering caused. The sacrifices are always too high when set against the achievements.

However, because the real world is what it is, revolutions, like wars, will go on occurring. There is hardly a nation that hasn't its roots in a revolutionary past. The price of the Soviet seizure of power, of the Civil War and of the Revolutionary Terror was extremely high; so was that of the Yugoslav Revolution, although it was proportionately "cheaper" than the October Revolution. I cannot see how either could have been avoided.

At the back of it all is Man's, and especially Communist Man's, indefatigable preoccupation with utopia. Reflect on the resurfacing of utopia in Gorbachov's rhetoric. If you look at his (or Ryzhkov's) articulations you will find the outlines of yet another "New Jerusalem" emerging: a "socialist" society supported by the gleaming electronic technology of the nuclear age.

—*It isn't really new, though. The glamour of science has always been part of the dream of "scientific socialism". But earlier varieties had to make do with tractors, steel mills, canals, and hydroelectric stations.*

DJILAS: Yes, but what is remarkable is that the new rulers of the Soviet Union, turning over (as they say they are) a new page in their planning methods and economic philosophy, should maintain this slavish addiction to utopianism. They realise that Stalinism, the "command economy", and the conservative bureaucracy have made the system a permanent loser *vis-à-vis* the variously mixed economies of the world. Yet here they are, investing their energies in yet another grand design that will prove illusory—in the fallacy of thinking that one can apply high technology and modern science to a monolithic political system and make it work as though it were a free and self-correcting mechanism.

—*But isn't Gorbachov taking the system to the very borders of the market economy and building (or trying to build) a great many suspiciously un-monolithic features into it?*

DJILAS: He is, but his error is to imagine that the gleaming

gadgets and the science-fiction thinking can be harnessed to the old "socialist" wagon—as though "existing socialism" were a jet fighter with a Mach 2 capability.

WON'T GORBACHOV sooner or later have to admit that maintaining a social system based on Karl Marx's analysis makes no more sense than claiming that 19th-century Darwinism should be our lodestar in zoology and biology in the year 2000?

It is a point often made by Sidney Hook and quite recently by Deng Xiaoping's people in China. Hu Yaobang observed in November 1986:

"Marx never saw a light bulb, Engels never saw an aeroplane."

Hence we cannot take their theories entirely on trust. The Soviets appear to be coming to similar conclusions. Last year Alexander Yakovlev admitted:

"Not even 70 Marxes could have foreseen in detail the future of the new society. . . ."

DJILAS: Perhaps in his heart of hearts Gorbachov realises that the Marxist conception of socialism is a museum piece. We don't know. What we do know is that he behaves as though he believes in the basic soundness of the Soviet system and its reformability through technology, renewed dedication, and the introduction of certain selective freedoms.

I sometimes wonder whether Gorbachov is reacting to Paul Milyukov's observation that, while in Western Europe technological revolutions always led to *more* democracy, they had the opposite effect in Russia. Certainly Gorbachov wants more "democratism" in the wake of the new technology, and if he comes anywhere close to succeeding, he will have broken the spell Milyukov remarked upon. But this is something for the distant future.

I am ready to believe that Gorbachov will impart a certain *élan* to the Soviet Party, and that some of his reforms *will* make the system marginally more efficient. But I doubt whether he will achieve a fully-fledged "restructuring" under existing conditions of "socialism". We have seen how very difficult it is in Yugoslavia, under our much-advertised but totally inadequate "self-management system", to get private enterprise going and to lift the economy out of the trough it has occupied for most of the three last decades. We have not succeeded because we have not mounted the necessary political reforms.

It is self-evident to me that you cannot mitigate the effects of the disease of Communism as a whole by excising or diluting some of its elements. And from this follows what is, to my mind, another iron law of Communism: every economic crisis of Communist society is, in fact, a political crisis—

—*A crisis of the system, would you say. . . ?*

DJILAS: Yes, this is the present crisis in the Soviet Union. It is, in reality, not about a sluggish economy, nor about a

lazy population, nor even about a corrupt civil service; but about the political system that is responsible for the growth and luxuriance of these characteristics.

THESE ARE *strong words from a man who first suggested the introduction of the self-management system to an unwilling Tito. Several decades later, Gorbachov, and the Bulgarians as well, are following in your footsteps, ignoring the bitter lessons of the Yugoslav experiment.*

DJILAS: This is so and the reason is, as I say, the Communist obsession with utopia. But it is a utopia with a difference. If the Communist utopia were of the purely airy-fairy kind, it would not have survived or given the world too much to think about.

But Communist utopias combine the vision of a classless society, human fulfillment and eternal peace with cunning tactics and violent strategy, and a seemingly scientific, problem-solving vocabulary that lends their utopian imaginings a certain plausibility. The violence is real—the “coming age of peace and plenty” is not.

This is undoubtedly a shrewd combination. Who would disapprove of freedom, equality, fraternity and peace? Who would be against Plato’s benign “totalitarianism” with which the Communist vision has a certain affinity? The problem is that the Communist utopia cannot be put into practice without changing the nature of Man, and that requires violence. Communism is Utopia in Power; it is the institutionalisation of violence. No economic reform, no “restructuring”, no temporary freedom of discussion can change that.

—You were, yourself, not reluctant to utter utopian forecasts in your days as a Communist leader, as you ruefully admit in “Rise and Fall” (1985). In 1948, you declared in the Cominform journal that in ten years Yugoslavia would catch up with Great Britain in per capita production.

DJILAS: That’s why I want to see these words put on the mantelpiece of every free and intelligent person: “You must oppose Communism.” It is the duty of those of us who come from the Communist movement and are familiar with the nature of the animal, to make this truth clear and relevant again to the thinking of people captivated by the new utopianism of Gorbachov. Our efforts will not have been wasted if we can persuade the West to remain strong, and to learn the art of dealing with the political crisis of the Soviet system within its own terms of reference.

—That’s where the West has been most deficient. The Soviet leaders have always had the heretic’s traditional advantage of being able to worship both at their own altars and at ours.

DJILAS: Yes, and that’s why it is of such great importance that Western politicians, journalists and other opinion-makers should now take the trouble to learn what exactly it is that has made the various Communist systems founder, and how the

Dengs and Gorbachovs are trying to make their leaking vessels seaworthy. The struggle in the world is not about the level of armaments; it is about political advantage and victory in the international political arena. The West is poor—and what is distressing—increasingly poor at playing this game.

The advent of Gorbachov has brought with it a tremendous increase in the political sophistication and effectiveness of expressing traditional Soviet hostility to the Western democracies. Look at Gorbachov’s speech to Soviet diplomats, his words to American teachers of Russian, to Western writers and intellectuals. Hardly a day passes without some nerve centre of the Western world being addressed, over the heads of Western governments, by the new Soviet leadership. The West is not paying back in kind except through its broadcasting stations, and these have their hands so stringently tied that their effectiveness, at least in the Soviet Union, is open to doubt. I can see no experts of Soviet affairs directing American or British or French foreign policy, while I *can* see Soviet experts of US and West European affairs—the Yakovlevs, the Dobrynins, the Falins—shaping the political and psychological policies of the Kremlin, and to signal effect.

Sooner or later Gorbachov’s successes will have to induce Western governments to rethink the way in which they deal with Moscow. Why haven’t Mrs Thatcher and President Mitterrand ensured that people of the calibre of Hugh Seton-Watson or Leonard Schapiro (both now late and lamented), Robert Conquest or Alain Besançon represent their countries as emissaries in Moscow or Peking?

THE OFFICIAL WESTERN conception of the USSR still rests on the assumption that the Soviet Union is a country rather than a cause. If it is a country, one deals with it on grounds of power and uses a combination of power and diplomacy to keep it at bay. If it is a cause, or a cause and a country, we don’t quite know how to deal with it. The age of faith is, allegedly, behind us. We are rather shame-faced about fighting ideological battles—and also very bad at it. We have, in fact, almost completely surrendered the political field of engagement to the Soviet Union.

DJILAS: And yet, it would be so easy to show up the hollowness of the Communist utopias. Look at the way Mao’s various utopias collapsed: the “Great Leap Forward” movement, the “Hundred Flowers” period, the Cultural Revolution. What is left of them? Poverty, starvation and abysmal backwardness which Deng’s “pragmatism” is now trying to put right. Look at Khrushchev’s 1961 Party programme which predicted that the Soviet Union would overtake the USA in per capita production by the year 1980, that all rents and transportation would be free! What is left of all that? A ramshackle Soviet economy and a primitive agriculture which Gorbachov is attempting to rescue as best he can. The Soviet share of world trade is a mere 4%, and Soviet foreign aid is no larger than that of Holland.

Look at the demise of the Yugoslav experiment which forced no less a person than Branko Mikulic, the Prime Minister, to admit in *Politika* (17 August 1987) that the “self-

management system" is responsible for his country's economic disaster. Yugoslavia has a foreign debt of \$23 billion; inflation is running at an annual rate of over 150%; our loss-making firms are now being allowed to go bankrupt, making thousands of workers unemployed; and there are serious strikes in the country.

Every variety of Communism that has been put to the test has ended in economic bankruptcy. That Mikhail Gorbachov's remedies for the Soviet system sound like nothing so much as the nostrums of Margaret Thatcher, contains one message to the world about the failed utopia of Marxism-Leninism. Another lesson, on the doubtful blessings of central planning and nationalisation, should be addressed to the West European Left. If Soviet leaders are now being forced to embark on the "privatisation" of the economy, can the West European Left cogently insist that socialism must mean *more* collective ownership?

—Your castigation of the utopian element in Communism has, it seems to me, certain weaknesses. If Communism is a universal ideology, which it is, I cannot see how it could do without a coherent package of long-term goals as a magnet to attract followers. No one in the Communist movement would expect a classless society and universal plenty to be attained easily, or perhaps to be attained at all. But a level-headed Communist would probably argue (as, for example, Leszek Kolakowski did in his early Marxist phase) that the utopian element is an essential part of all radical thinking. Without it, no revolutionary movement could take off or keep flying. Melvin J. Lasky—no supporter of utopias or revolutions—wrote a big book about those radical thinkers who believed that "the noble dream and the great deed have no real effective life without each other."² One need not be a Communist to believe this to be true. All idealists of whatever political colour would subscribe to it.

DJILAS: Idealism is one thing; the institutionalised mendacity with which your ideals are turned upside down and the whole of reality is redefined, is quite another. If you went down the list of all the things Communist leaders have offered in their various speeches and programmes, and wrote them down in one column on a sheet of paper under the heading of "Pledges", and then made up a second column under the heading of "Facts", you would merely have to write "the contrary" after each of the pledges to get the second column right.

² *Utopia and Revolution* (1976), p. X.

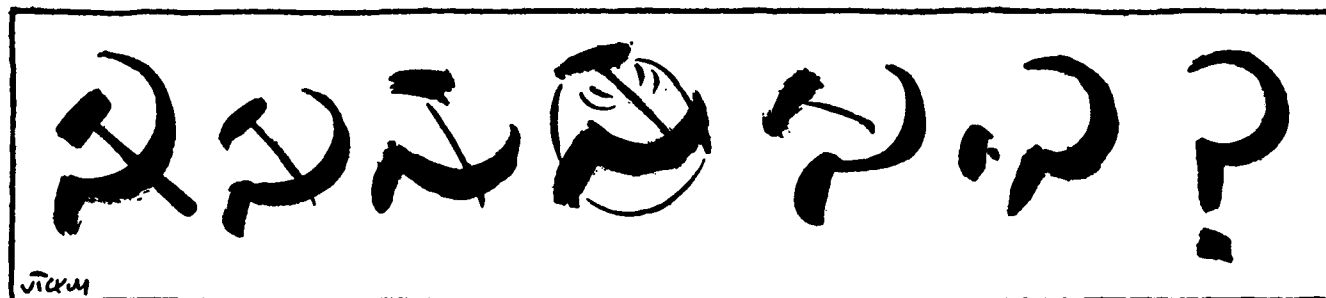
For example: the Communists offered a classless society but produced a privilege-ridden society and a class of monopolistic power-holders. They promised scientific efficiency but produced dismal backwardness and inefficiency. They promised economic plenty but created conditions that would shame some Third-World republics. They promised peace and the elimination of the conflict of interests among "socialist" countries but produced the Sino-Soviet conflict, war between Viet Nam and Cambodia, the occupation of Hungary and Czechoslovakia and the diabolisation of Yugoslavia. They repudiated, with Marx, the "cult of the personality" but produced in Mao, Stalin, Kim Il Sung, Ceaușescu, and other tyrants, the most monstrous cults of the personality history has known. I could go on. You would. I should imagine, agree that these crass repudiations of the Communist power-holders' solemn pledges rob their utopia of any virtue it may have possessed—if indeed it did possess any—in the first place.

THE FACTS THAT are now coming to light about the Soviet system confirm, point by point, what Western critics have been saying about it—and have been derided for saying—for the last 40 years.

I noticed with some amusement that a Yugoslav Communist, disillusioned by the performance of his Party, returned his Party card and decided to sue the Party on grounds not very different from the examples you have just given. He said he had joined the Party and had been paying his membership fees for a great many years on the understanding that the Party would give him socialism—cheap housing, free health care, a decent standard of living, an inflation-free economy, full employment, and so on. But as the Party could supply none of these elements of the socialism he had joined it for, there was a breach of contract and he wanted his money back. The man had a nerve—but also a great deal of natural justice on his side.

DJILAS: Yes, Communism is not only the kind of science-lined utopia we know about; it is a utopia that can only exist as utopia. Communism (or "socialism") as a *realistic* blueprint for running human society is nonsense and dangerous nonsense at that. 70 years of Communist history make it incumbent upon us to record this simple conclusion as a fact and a warning.

—The history of ideas is replete with utopias of one kind or another. Those that were put into practice usually caused



destruction and carnage. The rest remain rather intriguing flights of the imagination with which we have little reason to quarrel, or do we?

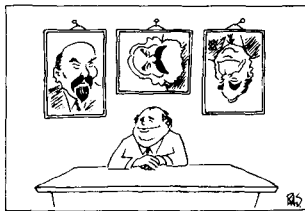
DJILAS: In 1968 I was asked to meet a group of Leftist students at Princeton University. The unrest on American campuses was riding high. The students assured me that within four years the USA would be "socialist". American socialism, they said, would of course be different—it would be a *developed* kind of socialism, without censorship, without repression, without a bankrupt economy, and so on. This put me on my guard.

"I don't really believe that the USA will be socialist by 1972", I said. "In any case, I very much hope that it will *not* be."

"How can you say that", the students asked.

"Because", I answered, "a socialist America would be the greatest calamity for the future of mankind. America is a rich and advanced country, and it has the means and the skills to build what would appear to be a working model of 'socialism'. If it did, a socialist USA would send a false message to the rest of the world that there is such a thing as good and workable socialism, whereas there isn't."

2. If Gorbachov Falls



HOWEVER you and I may see the long-term chances of a socialist utopia, Gorbachov seems to be determined to bring it about through modernisation, high technology and the motivation of his human resources. Given

the enormous natural wealth of the Soviet Union and a long-suffering population, it would be extraordinary if he failed completely. We have to assume that, short of a sudden palace revolution (which is by no means impossible), Gorbachov will make some slow and painful progress. Is it in our interest that he should?

DJILAS: Before I answer your question, let me say that Gorbachov has so far tackled only the foothills of the mountain range he has to climb. There has been much sermonising, criticism, encouragement and some limited legislation—none of which has yet begun to bite. His difficulties will begin in three or four years from now when decentralisation, privatisation and self-management will confront him with the painful fact that none of these reforms can be made really effective without revamping the *political* profile of Soviet society. That is the experience we have had in Yugoslavia and that is what the Hungarian Communists, too, are now discovering to their dismay. Up will go the demand for political pluralism.

—To well-schooled Marxists this should not come as a surprise. Some of Gorbachov's economic advisors are already

saying that "social relations" will have to be brought into harmony with "production relations". In plain language this means: you cannot have a free and productive economy without political pluralism.

DJILAS: Yes, and this is going to cause trouble, because while members of the Soviet *apparat* may well be forced, lured or cajoled into supporting reforms for a more productive economy, they cannot be lured or cajoled into underwriting the dissolution of the Party and the destruction of their own jobs and security. Economic reform without political pluralisation will bankrupt the system. Political pluralisation, on the other hand, would *end* the system. Gorbachov and his successors will no doubt choose the former. The Soviet system is economically bankrupt—perhaps after *perestroika* it will be slightly less bankrupt. But I cannot see how they could subscribe to political pluralism without giving up their title to rule.

—What you are saying again is that Gorbachov is a transitory phenomenon. . . .

DJILAS: Yes, I am. He may well be ousted from power when the full implications of his reforms dawn upon the hardliners. Or he may, seeing the opposition, relinquish power as he once hinted that he might. The setbacks he suffered in the Yeltsin affair and on Armenia are tips of the iceberg.

Gorbachov could become a great figure in history if he had the good fortune to be toppled right now—or if, as I say, he gave up in despair. *Now* he is seen as a man of clear vision, a man of critical spirit, a man unafraid of the Soviet past, a man of un-Soviet language, a man who has seen what's wrong with the system and has tried to do something radical about it. A few years from now his zeal will drown in the mire of Russian life and the unredeemable contradictions of the Soviet system. Today is Gorbachov's finest hour; whatever comes next will be an anticlimax.

That brings me to your question. A greatly strengthened Soviet system would, of course, *not* be in the interests of world freedom. But that strengthening of the system is, in my judgment, not going to happen overnight, if it is going to happen at all.

—Aren't we writing off the power and elasticity of the system as it is in too cavalier a manner? I would have thought a conservative but unblinkered man of the apparat could make a good case for sticking out against Gorbachov.

"We lifted, under Stalin, a backward Asiatic economy into the 20th century [he would argue]. Yes, we were using repression. Yes, we herded manpower reserves from the villages to the factories. Yes, we kept the standard of living low—but look at our results! We have won a terrible war, we have an empire, we are a superpower equal in strength to the USA. Our system—whether feared or admired—is spreading in the world, and the Russian nation is enjoying its long-delayed rendezvous with History. Why risk all that with your reforms? If we need reforms, as we undoubtedly do, why not proceed slowly and keep them strictly within the confines of the system? The One-Party state and the

command economy have a lot of life left in them. They are our way of doing things.”

DJILAS: That kind of thinking might have made sense—if you were willing to pay the price—in the 1930s. In the 1990s, modernisation means educating and employing highly skilled manpower in small and self-managed units. The post-Industrial revolution is based on knowledge, individual initiative and a high sense of personal responsibility. None of these things can be attained by central control, much less repression. The methods, therefore, that helped the Soviet Union to “take off” as an industrialised power cannot succeed in turning it into a post-Industrial power.

For example, the use of the computer—to point to the most obvious obstacle to conservatism of the sort you have depicted—militates against any form of censorship and promotes, by its very nature, the dissemination of information. Not only that, but the whole social base of socialism, Soviet style (and, in fact, any contemporary style), has begun to vanish. The traditional working class is dwindling, and has already dwindled to the extent that in Germany and Britain, for example, it can no longer hope to secure the election of socialist governments even if the whole working class voted socialist, which it never does. Soviet society, if it is to enter the post-Industrial age, is bound to follow suit. The state of the proletariat is destined to wither because there will not be enough proletarians left to sustain even that, false, sense of legitimacy which the Soviet state bestowed on itself through Marx and Lenin.

Gorbachov's conservative Soviet opponents do not, therefore, have a strong case. That doesn't mean to say that they may not get the better of him in the short run; but because the reforms of Gorbachov will have to be carried out sooner or later, with or without Gorbachov, the conservative/Stalinist argument is bound to be a loser—unless, of course, the Soviet *apparatus* decides that modernisation is not for them and that they'd rather face the dangers of stagnation than the risks of *perestroika*.

AREN'T DEMOCRATS of the West-European liberal persuasion almost as self-righteous and, indeed, arrogant about the virtues of their system as the Soviet establishment is about its own? We find it self-evident that Soviet society should want what we want—that it should want to follow our curve of development from the supremacy of the Church or the aristocracy or an absolute monarch, to enlightenment, pluralism, liberalism, democracy and participation. But what if the Russian psyche is different? What if the Russian apparatus and the people, too, should genuinely feel that the Soviet system, good or bad, is their way of doing things and that they don't want to be taught democracy by foreigners? We find it almost unimaginable that this should be so. Yet there are signs on every page of Soviet (as well, of course, as Russian) history that Paternalism, respect for Authority, even Regimentation are well-accepted features of Russian life and political culture. They express the ethos of the majority. Can democrats quarrel with that?

DJILAS: This is a tricky question. It could be turned around to read in a manner many Russians would regard as offensive, and indeed some have done so. It could be made to read: “Democracy is for the culturally ‘superior’ nations of the West. The Russians are used to serfdom of one kind or another. The Soviet system, or perhaps some improved variety of the Soviet system, suits them rather well. No need to worry too much about their freedom, for they don't seem to be unduly agitated by the lack of it.”

I do not deny that Russian reactions are, for whatever historical and cultural reasons, different from French or British reactions. But given time and political self-education, I don't think the differences are here to stay. You are, of course, right to suggest that the indiscriminate projection of Western values on to other cultures is a sign of Western conceit and parochialism and is politically dangerous. The Americans have been the worst offenders.

—But there are, surely, lessons to be learnt from the observable facts. Gorbachov's reforms are proceeding only very slowly and in the teeth of both bureaucratic and popular opposition; popular “extra-mural” organisations such as “Pamyat” are in hot pursuit of Russian national traditions rather than civic freedoms; the intellectuals who stand up for human rights are a small group and are looked upon with incomprehension, if not hostility, by the general public.

An American historian once told me that although he distrusted national stereotypes, he felt there was a sense in which the French in the Napoleonic period had a real liking, as a nation, for military service. Would it be too far-fetched to suggest, he asked, that the Russian people have developed, in the second half of the 20th century, a high degree of tolerance for an all-providing, egalitarian nanny-state?

DJILAS: Every leadership in the Soviet Union, and indeed all Russian governments under the Czars, was aware and afraid of the “dark Russian masses”. Chaos and anarchy are never far beneath the surface of Russian tranquillity. If the purpose of your questioning is to show that it would be more difficult to install democracy in Moscow than, shall we say, in Prague—I would agree because we cannot close our eyes to the facts of history. But if you question the suitability and ripeness of the Russian people to share the benefits—and risks—of liberal democracy, then I cannot agree with you. The Russians are endowed with the same human characteristics as any Italian or Swede. They do not enjoy the knout any more than you and I do, and we are doing ourselves, and them, no good by harping on the theme of “Oh, but the Russians are different. . . .” That is the easy and irresponsible way out of a difficult, but challenging, skein of problems.

—Gorbachov is now trying to educate the Russian people in the ways of freedom and tolerance. He is doing it, in true Russian fashion, from above. Some think he is doing it too slowly, others that he is reckless and going too fast.

DJILAS: He is going at the right speed in my opinion. It is the speed I would take if I were in his position. His problems are immense. A few days ago I read an article by one of the

senior journalists of *Pravda* in which the point was made that under its new relative freedom, the Soviet press was launched on a no-holds-barred kind of fault-finding mission, and that it was creating too many “anti-heroes”. This, it was argued, was wrong. The “duty” of the press was not to indulge in dramatic feats of criticism but to remove the woodworm from Soviet society. Soviet journalists (it said) must concentrate on creating a sane moral climate and the right conditions for a more productive economy.

—*Similar views were expressed by a number of conservative speakers at the 19th Party Conference—Y. V. Bondarev of the RSFSR Writers' Union, for example, who observed that a nihilistic, “immoral press cannot teach morality to others”.*

DJILAS: These are typical manifestations of the limits of “openness”. The idea that the press has a “duty” is clearly a remnant of Stalin and Lenin. At the same time, the media do enjoy some, as yet undefined, freedom which certainly extends to everything classified as “negative”, but not to the social order as a whole. Gorbachov’s freedom, while laudable for what it is, is a guided freedom, based on the assumption that there is (as he often says) such a thing as “socialist morality” which the freedom he is unleashing must promote. This is most unsatisfactory. The whole point about morality is that it can be neither a “socialist” nor a “capitalist” nor a Buddhist morality. It can, by the very nature of the concept, only be *Morality* without any kind of a coefficient.

—*Again, you have come a long way from believing with Lenin that morality is what is good for the revolution and the proletariat.*

DJILAS: I have. The same goes for Gorbachov’s notion of democracy and “democratisation”. You either have democracy which means rule by the people and therefore unrestricted pluralism, or no democracy. Under Gorbachov’s transitional system there is a kind of guided democracy which is too guided to satisfy the real reformers and too democratic to satisfy the conservatives. He is on slippery ground.

THE CONFUSION is genuine and gives us a fascinating picture of what happens to a prisoner who, having spent years behind bars, is suddenly told that he is free but must now look after himself. Such men are known to have collapsed under the strain—or asked to be taken back into the reassuring community of prison life.

To match your quotation from “*Pravda*”, I have one from “*Izvestia*” in which the complaint is made that the average reader does not know what to make of really free journalism. Our people, the article says, are accustomed to thinking that whatever a journalist writes in his paper is inspired by Authority. Now we are told that this is no longer so, that he may very well represent neither Gorbachov, nor the Politburo, nor even the local Soviet—but only himself. How can people understand

this? Whom does a journalist represent if he represents no one but himself? I found this article an incomparable introduction to the hazards of liberty; it would take the pen of a Dostoevsky to depict its full impact on the souls of people unprepared for it.

DJILAS: This exemplifies one of the most baneful aspects of the heritage of totalitarianism. It isn’t true that the Soviet public have been ill-informed about what goes on in Soviet society. The truth is different and more depressing. The Soviet people have never felt free to say “Here is what I know—and here is what I conclude from that knowledge”. No, they put their information aside and wait to hear what Authority expects them to believe.

—*We saw a wonderful example of this in March 1988. Nina Andreyeva’s by now celebrated attack on the Gorbachov reforms appeared in “Sovietskaya Rossiya” on 13 March 1988; the counter-blast from “Pravda” did not come out until 5 April 1988. There was a three-week vacuum in the central direction of public opinion. The man in the street did not know which way to salute. Glasnost was placing too heavy a burden on him. Here is how one Ruslan Kozlov saw his, and the country’s, dilemma:*

“I am ashamed to admit it today, but on 13 March I took the [Nina Andreyeva’s] anti-restructuring stance to be the official viewpoint shared by the country’s political leadership. . . . I was not the only person who thought that way. . . . What happened during those ‘three weeks of stagnation’? Was there perhaps a succession of party and Komsomol meetings which angrily rebuked those committed to restoring the old ‘order’ in which servility and misrepresentation prevailed? No. Quite the reverse—in Lenin-grad, for instance, conferences were organised which were clearly in support of N. Andreyeva’s article. One was even shown on television. . . . The situation is undoubtedly much easier for us now—the ‘Pravda’ article convincingly and concretely guaranteed the Party leadership’s loyalty to the course of expanding glasnost and democratisation. . . .”³

DJILAS: Yes, the successful, or near-successful brainwashing of the Soviet public is one of those otherwise not very numerous features of the Orwellian nightmare that has actually come true. I do not envy Gorbachov his job.

—*It is increasingly clear that the Gorbachov reforms require the complete transformation of Soviet thinking and manners in individuals as much as in institutions. Perestroika is assuming more and more the characteristics of moral-rearmament, or, if you like, of a Reformation of the Martin Luther type, if we look upon Stalinist Moscow as the impure Papacy. Gorbachov’s unceasing calls to the individual citizen to “re-structure himself”, and his campaign against what one might call State indulgences (i.e. corruption), point to an analogy.*

DJILAS: If that is so, Gorbachov might do worse than begin with the rehabilitation—resurrection he cannot guarantee—

³ *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 21 April 1988.

of those who have been cruelly wronged by an erring Pope. He really must have the Red Army generals of the 1938 show trials politically rehabilitated. He must rehabilitate Bukharin (he has partially done this already) and all the other Old Bolsheviks. Above all, he must see to it that Trotsky is restored to his rightful place in the Soviet pantheon as an historic revolutionary leader, organiser, and tribune. This is not to say that one Bolshevik faction or another would have done much better; it is the theory that is grievously mistaken, and the ruinous practice follows suit. But no history should be tampered with, distorted, censored.

—*How should or would all that affect the client states in East and Central Europe?*

DJILAS: It would and should have its repercussions. However, as I said earlier, these should not lead to revolutionary upheavals if Gorbachov's plans are not thwarted.

—*Should it mean, for example, the rehabilitation of Imre Nagy and Pál Maléter, as Hungarian dissidents—and indeed the Hungarian nation—increasingly demand?*

DJILAS: It should, it absolutely should. Now that János Kádár has retired from the exercise of real power and the members of the new Hungarian leadership have no personal responsibility for the suppression of the Uprising, the way should be open for the rehabilitation of Imre Nagy and the 400 people hanged by the Kádár authorities in the 1957-59 period. Kádár was personally responsible for the deception that led to Imre Nagy's arrest, and he must have acquiesced in his execution.

—*Khrushchev, of course, always protested, while supporting the executions, that the execution of Imre Nagy and his associates was something the Hungarians had ordered—and said so, for example, to Ambassador Micunovic.*

DJILAS: Imre Nagy and his friends were put to death on Moscow's orders and Kádár is co-responsible because he failed to intervene. Mind you, Kádár was a Soviet puppet at the time. He had come to power at the point of Soviet bayonets and with Soviet guns. He had, nevertheless, enough influence as one of Khrushchev's favourite comrades to save the lives of Nagy and his associates if he had really wanted to.

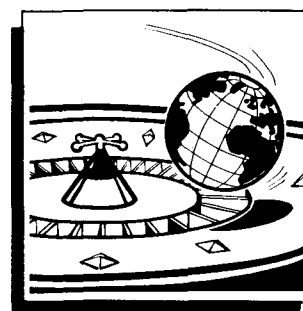
Nagy's execution was, incidentally, one of Khrushchev's great mistakes—a product of the Soviet leadership's fresh suspicions of Tito. But Kádár made a miraculous recovery; the former Quisling apparently had a change of heart and was, for two decades, generally seen in Hungary as the guarantor of the country's relative freedom and economic well-being. He was highly esteemed in Yugoslavia too, and the general view was that he was a patriotic Hungarian more than a Communist.

BUT THE SHARP turns in his career are exceptional even by Communist standards. Arrested and tortured under Rákosi, he was instrumental in securing a confession from László Rajk on the understanding that Rajk's life would

be spared. It wasn't. A minister in Imre Nagy's 1956 revolutionary government, he betrayed Nagy, deserted the Revolution and returned as head of a Quisling government. Having settled accounts with the 1956 revolutionaries with great brutality, he proceeded to seek national reconciliation by his "liberal" policies. In his old age he has been spared the need to make yet another volte-face because, in March 1988, he was removed from power. I should not like to be privy to János Kádár's conscience.

DJILAS: The careers of Nagy and Kádár are typical of the laws of feudal society. If a feudal baron rebels against his King, or some provincial governor against the Sultan, he is put down as Imre Nagy was. If he falls in line, he is rewarded and sometimes given a measure of freedom—as Kádár was—provided that the King's rule is not endangered. If he becomes a hindrance or a nuisance, he is retired. The Soviet empire is entirely of that nature. We have had plenty of experience of it and should have no illusions about it.

3. End of an Empire— Rebirth of the Russian Nation



most likely to embrace?

SUPPOSE COMMUNIST societies as we have known them gradually faded away under the pressure of modernisation or were brought down under less peaceful conditions—what sort of new “governing themes” would the Russian, Polish, Romanian and the other Central and East European nations be

DJILAS: You are assuming that societies need “governing themes”. I'm not so sure, but I can see what you are driving at. You are asking: what is going to replace the utopian element, for example, in Russian thinking? Well, the new governing theme will have to be something more deeply rooted in the popular psyche than the egalitarian creed of Communism; and my candidate for that theme is a profound form of patriotism (not Nationalism) based on the loving care of national culture and especially language.

This theme is, in fact, already forming under the surface in every Communist country. In Yugoslavia, for example, people like the distinguished poet Matija Beckovic (who happens to be a close personal friend) connect their fundamental criticism of the Communist system to a rediscovery of the national past. Dobrica Cosic, an excellent Serbian writer, has written a four-volume novel about the role of the Serb nation in the First World War. . . . Solzhenitsyn is trying to retrieve the Russian past in his own spectacular way, so is Valentin Rasputin. So are, each in their own way, the Armenians, Kazakhs, Estonians, Latvians and Ukrainians. A second

theme will be the solidarity of human beings with their fellow men and women—the better off with the poor, and nation with nation. This will not be “socialism”, much less doctrinaire socialism. It will focus on the precariousness and precariousness of life on this planet, for no one has yet hit upon a worthier philosophy than the maintenance of life in all its forms. Religious leaders, philosophers and ideologues have all sought to give us a variety of answers to our quest for the meaning of life, yet their nostrums tend to inflict more suffering than they manage to relieve. After the horrendous trials of Communism and Nazism, perhaps we ought to be content with the simple truth that the purpose and meaning of life is *life*—life loyally rooted in a nation, and conducted with a maximum sense of solidarity towards our fellow creatures, whether walking on two legs or four.

—Wouldn't you have condemned all this in your earlier life as feeble “bourgeois humanitarianism”?

DJILAS: Yes, I would—but we do learn from our mistakes and history, don't we? What I'm now suggesting is neither a bourgeois nor an anti-bourgeois philosophy, but a humane answer to human problems.

—What we have here is a philosophy of life which is patriotic without being nationalistic, socially responsible without being socialist, and respectful of human rights and those of all creation without calling itself Christian. I can hear some critics murmuring that it smacks too much of a general “do-goodism” to attract robust nations such as the Russians, Poles or Serbs.

DJILAS: I don't think that's fair. If and when it comes to the post-Communist dispensation, every people or nation will have to find its own “ideology” based on the reality of the

nation. It would then be up to each to decide what collective personality it would want to assume. In Yugoslavia, for example, the Slovenes would undoubtedly want to pick up their old ties with Central Europe, the Serbs might (or might not) want to emphasise their own strong ties with West European culture, and so on.

—Are you, in fact, assuming the disintegration of Yugoslavia? If Serbs, Croats, Montenegrins, Macedonians are all to be free to cultivate and celebrate their own national identity. . . .

DJILAS: . . . which they absolutely must be. . . .

— . . . then Yugoslavia is most unlikely to survive as a single state?

DJILAS: The assertion of national identity should not necessarily mean hostility among these nations. They may very well decide to maintain the present structures, or replace them with new ones. They will, however, fully assume their national personalities, as some of them are already doing.

—In the Soviet Union, then, you would envisage the emergence of strong Ukrainian, Estonian, Latvian, Uzbek, and Armenian calls for national “ideologies”. Would that not mean separatism at the end of the day?

DJILAS: Yes, it would, and it is, as we have seen, already under way, though not as noticeably as in Yugoslavia. But it would also mean the emancipation of the Russian nation from the present (and often unwillingly borne) burdens of empire.

—We are now talking about the break-up of the Soviet Union, aren't we?

“Help This Nice Man”

Washington D.C.



ON 15 APRIL 1986, when U.S. bombers gave a permanent headache to Libya's Moammar Gadhafi, Bill Casey brought a group of non-CIA economists in to see the President. As bombs fell on Tripoli, statistics about the Soviet economy rained on Ronald Reagan.

“What does all this mean?” he asked as the hour long presentation ended.

IT MEANT, the outside consultants explained, that the conventional wisdom about the Soviet Union's strength was wrong. Instead of steadily growing, production had been stagnant for years.

This meant further that the new leader, Mikhail Gorbachov, would soon be faced with an internal crisis. He would have to shake up the economic system radically to force new growth, or accept a reduction in what was becoming an unsustainable level of military spending. Soviet economic weakness could profoundly affect arms talks and

the maintenance of the empire from Afghanistan to Cuba.

The President wanted to know what the effect of this new interpretation would be on his policy planners.

“They'll say, ‘Help this nice man’”, replied one of the economists. Mr Reagan nodded: “I know, the Genscher line.” He was referring to the “Ostpolitik” urgings of West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who is eager to finance the revival of Moscow's trade.

THAT WAS JUST TWO YEARS AGO, when Mr Reagan presided over an administration split between Defense-CIA-NSC hard-liners and the accommodationists at State.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE “GENSCHER LINE” has taken hold in the Reagan administration; all the hard-liners have been routed. Secretary of State George Shultz has just agreed to link START to “star wars”, a huge concession. Although both superpowers have sold the world's media on the seeming impossibility of a START treaty at the summit, the fix is in for a rush to sign in Moscow.

The Russians are exploiting Mr Reagan's yearning for a blaze of glory. The West is failing to exploit the urgency of the Russians' need to catch their breath.

William Safire
in the NEW YORK TIMES

DJILAS: We are talking about the natural expiry of an unnatural and tyrannical régime which is bound to come, as surely as the British and French Empires had to face their demise when the time was ripe. The Russian people would benefit the most. They would gain a free and more prosperous life and yet remain, undoubtedly, a great nation.

You see, the Communist system has forced the Russian people into a state of sulking introspection which seeks outlets in xenophobia, petulant demonstrations of national superiority—or, at the opposite end, maudlin admissions of national inferiority. I firmly believe that a reduced but self-confident, opened-up democratic Russian state would induce much less brooding in the Russian people and make them a happier race, to the extent that Russians can be happy. Imagine what it would mean for free men and women everywhere to see this last bastion of universal unfreedom go the way of all tyrannies!

—Gorbachov and the Politburo must have conducted a very

thorough assessment of the world “correlation of forces” before embarking on perestroika. They must have come to the unsurprising conclusion that the West was not threatening to make war on them and that it was, therefore, safe to launch the reform movement. As the Soviet Union is preoccupied with putting its house in order and diverting, or hoping to divert, resources from the military, is it your judgment that the West need not fear Soviet expansionism as long, at least, as the reform-movement lasts?

DJILAS: Yes, indeed. If “restructuring” is to be seriously pursued, which it is, the Soviet Union will have neither the will nor the energy to embark on expansionist policies. But the West, and the Americans in particular, always misunderstood the nature of the Soviet threat. It has never been just, or even predominantly, a *military* threat, though it has been that too. The threat has always been political and *psychological*, and it is on that front that the Western world is in urgent need of rearming itself. I keep coming back to this point because

A Fable about Stalin

Moscow



FROM THE FIRST days of reconstruction and “glasnost”, voices began to be raised, at first as masked hints and then more clearly, at the perceived danger in “open discussions”. They saw in it nothing more nor less than the undermining of the foundations of Socialism and the “loss of principles” and the “gains of the epoch”. . . . Of course, everyone is entitled to his opinion. And in this the need arises to speak about it, without beating about the bush.

I will begin with the things familiar to me, the things I have learnt in the course of my life. Once I happened to have a particular conversation with my countrymen. I went to my *ail* [encampment] to attend the funeral of the last of my father’s sisters. At the funeral repast a conversation began over a cup of tea. As usual, it was about this and that, about Czars and Wise Men, including Stalin. And then one of the old men told us an interesting fable, an anecdote of a didactic nature.

“STALIN gathered his close comrades-in-arms and said: ‘You rack your brains over the question of how to rule the people so that all of them, the whole lot to the last one under the sun, will look into my eyes. If I blink—everyone will blink, if I open my eyes—everyone will open his eyes, so that I will be a living god to all of them, because it was said long ago: The Czar is not a god, but none the less he is not less important than God. I am going to teach you now how to treat the people.’

“SO HE ORDERED a chicken to be brought to him. He plucked that chicken alive in full view of all of them, down to the last feather, to the red flesh, so to speak. Only the

comb was left on the head of the former feathered creature.

‘Now you watch’, he said, and released the plucked chicken. The chicken should have run away—in any direction. But the chicken would not go anywhere. It could not endure the sun, and it was cold in the shade. So the poor creature clung to Stalin’s boots. The leader threw a handful of grain to the chicken, and it followed him everywhere; otherwise it would perish of hunger, that was clear.

‘This is the way to rule the people’, Stalin said in a didactic tone.”

THEN A HUSH DESCENDED, I remember. That was an old man’s fable, nothing else. But the people present were frankly delighted with it, clicking their tongues and snapping their fingers, obviously finding in this some striking analogies for themselves. Just imagine what can happen in life. . . . And what foresight Stalin had! What a thing he thought up! He was a *Padishah* over all the Shahs, that you cannot deny. And that chicken—clever, wasn’t it? . . .

However, one of the people in our group made a remark which gave an impetus to the further conversation, whose nature was far from anecdotal.

“ALL THIS IS TRUE, though it is put as a fable”, one of them said, shaking his head. “They started dispossessing us Kulaks—so that we would resemble that chicken. What other purpose was there for breaking our wings? . . .”

Struck by pestilence and drought, persecuted and dispossessed, people were moving en masse from Kazakhstan. They were trying to sell little children and young girls for a crust of bread, as they knew that they would perish in that hell anyway. Whole graveyards appeared on the sides of the roads. All this suddenly came to the mind of the people gathered there, prompted by the remark. And Stalin was the main protagonist in all those disasters—as if he were the troublemaker rather than the leader of the greatest revolutionary party, which had declared the happiness of working people as its goal. . . .

Chingiz Aytmatov

THIS is an excerpt from an article by CHINGIZ AYTMATOV recently published in “Sovietskaya Kirgiziya” (May 1988), entitled “Are The Foundations Undermined?”

it can never be stressed enough. Gorbachov and his friends are able propagandists. Note how brilliantly they have turned the "Zero-option" affair to their advantage. If I were the President of the USA, I would continue to worry about the propaganda fall-out of my summit-conferences with Gorbachov.

—When you say that the Soviet bloc expects no military threat from the West, or NATO from the East, are you putting, tacitly at least, an equation mark between the two alliances?

DJILAS: In one sense only. The Kremlin's inclination, indeed its ability, to be warlike in the foreseeable future is limited by the likely behaviour of Moscow's client states in Eastern Europe. America's inclination to be warlike is limited by the likely behaviour of its Allies in Western Europe. The Russians will not risk aggression because they realise that they could not count on the Poles, Czechs, East Germans and Hungarians, except as sources of destabilisation. The Americans, on the other hand, will avoid taking risks, partly because they are, as a liberal democracy, extremely unwarlike, and also because they would not be able to carry the West European countries with them except in a dramatically clear-cut case of Soviet aggression on West European soil. This is disheartening because it betrays a lack of moral fibre, a loss of global purpose and a creeping sense of neutralism in once-powerful West Europe; but it is a fact of life in 1988.

—For one reason or another, peace is, then, assured and we can expect Gorbachov's "revolution-within-the-revolution" to go ahead?

DJILAS: Yes, I think we probably can, but the political struggle goes on: and it is with that in mind that the whole question of Arms Control has to be considered.

Arms Control is about political control; it is about the decoupling of Europe from America and especially the neutralisation of Germany. An INF-free Western Europe facing a conventionally superior Kremlin will mean a weaker Europe

and a stronger USSR. It is, as I say, the political dimension of this weakening that the West should worry about. It is possible to redress an imbalance in nuclear arms. But the perception that the Soviet system has changed into something other than what it is, and is no longer a threat to the liberal democracies, is much more difficult to erase once it has got hold of the Western imagination. Mikhail Gorbachov is doing his best that it should.

ARE YOU SUGGESTING that democracies should cease to be democracies—that German politicians should lift their sights above the next Länder elections, American Presidents above their ratings in next week's polls, and Frenchmen above their willingness to fight to the bones of the last German Grenadier?

DJILAS: In a sense, yes, I am. We cannot, of course, fine-tune what is not fine-tunable; but the West should be able to co-ordinate enough of its interests to prevent NATO from degenerating into a suicide pact.

You must remember one thing: the Soviet Union is now talking to us from a position of great and openly admitted weakness. It is reaping the rewards of 70 years of economic mismanagement and the squandering of its human resources. It is trying, under Gorbachov, to shed its siege-mentality but cannot do so as long as it feels itself to be under Western pressure in terms of space defence, arms technology and the post-Industrial revolution. It wants the West to take the pressure off the Soviet system.

It is for the West to say Yes or No to that request. We should, in my considered opinion, not accede to it unless the Soviet state and the Communist Party provide a whole string of political guarantees, of the most tangible and enforceable kind, that international civil war, which they declared on the rest of the world in 1917, has ceased to be their objective. Seventy years after the Bolshevik Revolution it's not we who are the supplicants—it is the Kremlin.

© 1988 by George Urban and Milovan Djilas

Places, Everyone

Our hero strolls into his office.
He is late.
His red-faced boss follows him
and makes sarcastic remarks:
"It was good of you to grace us
with your presence—
we aren't inconveniencing you—are we?"
The hero smiles hugely, turns,
and with a mighty swipe
rids his desk of invoices, orders,
telephones, blotters, paper trays,
executive toy and name-plaque.
He retrieves his Chicago Cubs Baseball Cap

and, without a word, retires.
That's the show biz version.
The version on Monroe Street
is a smidgen more pedestrian.
If we take the scene up from "are we?"
Joe Employee sits down at his desk,
humbly checks his appointment diary,
sees three clients, dictates nine letters,
attends a strategy meeting,
and hopes his misdemeanour
doesn't ruin his chances of promotion.
Repeat this sentence for forty years.
Print THE END in capitals.

Julie O'Callaghan

Three Poems by Gerard Woodward

The Brontë Brother

I hear them at night whispering
In their odorous and dark sisterhood,
“How will we get away?” Amid the comfort

Of their shared bed, the moonlight
Making beautiful African hills of the bedclothes.
Their hair seems sewn to their heads,

The beautiful stitching that divides their hair
With such a straight white line,
Their scalps are so pale,

When I see the crowns of their heads on the pillow
It is three faint white lines each at an angle
To the other like half-formed lettering.

And one fears she will be last to die
And one uses her clothes
As a feathery shadow. (I lie

In the moonlight in the garden
And I play with the light to see
If I can feel it with my eyes shut

Moving my hand smoothly from shadow to light
And when I feel the moon's heat I open my eyes
And see this exquisite blue candelabra

Hanging in the dark garden air.)
And I imagine them in jewels and metal necklaces
As though an oval mirror had been

Broken over them and they wore its fragments
As acts of heroism.
And I will be drunk on moonlight

As I watch their safe sleep and sniff
The strong smell of their young hair
And their paper-white scalps

My breath passes in clouds over them.
One day I will do a picture of them
Without their hands, of course,

And I will fold my painting over
So that the future will make
A ghost cross, a faint cross

Across the face of the painting,
A flaking cross of missing paint
Like the beautiful seams of their heads

So that the future will unfold my sisters
As they watch moonlight through a window frame
And see them as bearers of an invisible cross.

Les Grands Arbres

I used to clamber through bracken
That was higher than me
As though picking my way
Through a silent crowd,
And I felt I was travelling
Over a huge eiderdown
As the bracken stretched over acres
Tucked in at every horizon.
I could fall backwards safely
And fall forwards down a small hillock
And each stalk would bend
To take my weight
And lower me slowly as though
I were descending the hill

That is made by the folded knees
Of the creature that sleeps beneath this quilt.
And I would hear streams and never see them
And mistake dead stalks for adders
And the smell that was
The insides of satchels.
I would be beautifully lost
In green tunnels of my own making,
Pioneer, discovering a continent
That seemed to blanket the entire world
In its rustling and strong-smelling secrecy.
And in the centre of this I would discover
My father, bent intent over a sketch-book
Busily recording a set of fir trees
And with his soft pencil he wrote
In the corner the French for the Big Trees.
And I was puzzled at this
As my father is not French
And then I wondered what language
We really spoke, or the trees,
What dialects had they invented
As they kept still for my father
And held for so long that awkward pose?

Woman Coming In From The Rain

She enters with the slow elegance
Of a bishop as she hangs her umbrella
On the hook of the hat-stand.

Her coat opens like church doors
And releases the flock of smells
That rain has made of her.

And when she enters the kitchen
She is soaked again by dinner-steam
And loves it,

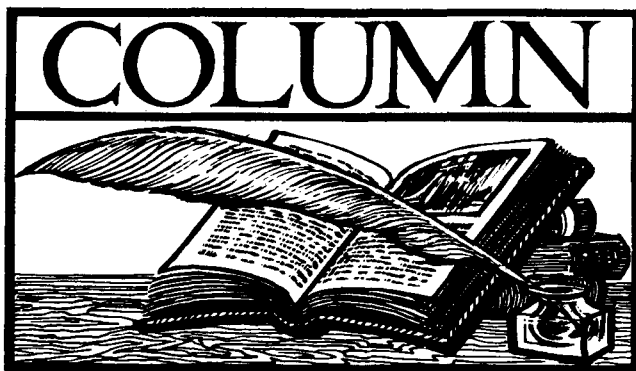
Holds her face over the potato pan
And wears the balaclava of steam
That this gives her.

And her eyelids are full of steam tears
That make her eyes feel huge
As she watches her face through a gap

In the condensation of the mirror.
And she peels off the nerveless skin
Of her gloves

So that she may feel again
And enjoys the wet textures
Of her cat's fur.

And as her body lives with flavours
What dry sheaves of harvest wheat
Her husband's kiss feels to her.



DOROTHY PARKER—H. L. Mencken—Winston Churchill—Oscar Wilde: spot the connection. Yes, Madam? You, Sir? Right! Like Groucho Marx or Socrates, all are victims of the notorious Attrib. Anonymous epigrams, lying unclaimed in the baggage-lockers of literature, periodically get assigned to them by dictionaries of quotations, in which “(Attrib.)” is the sign that scholarship, time, and patience have all run out. “I don’t know who said it; I know I never read it” ran the refrain of a 1940s pop song. The apophthegm in that instance turned out to be “Love is grand”—which I doubt could be attributed to any of the phrase-makers so far cited, or so far-sighted. Perhaps only the music publishers will demand a copyright fee. They usually do.

No one, so far as I know, has yet stencilled his name or initials on the remark that’s recently haunted me: *De mortuis nil nisi bunkum*. I’d always imagined it was Mencken’s; but extensive research (i.e. looking in a book of quotations) reveals its hesitant ascription to the late Harold Laski, the British Socialist Professor who helped to found the fellow-travelling Left Book Club in 1936. I’d never have thought it of him: it’s rather like hearing that Barbara Frietchie enjoyed a sing-song with the Confederates.

And anyway the saying isn’t true. Having reached an age when people turn sadly to the obituary columns for news of their friends, I’ve noted in recent years a refreshing absence of cant. “His short months with Trimstone and Breacle were marked by falling sales figures. . . .” “The asperity of her observations was not always matched by either charity or wisdom. . . .” The examples are imaginary: the tone is not. In some instances, signed obituaries now give a truly rounded picture, free from the institutional discretion which used to call forth rejoinders headed “H.L.M. (or D.P., W.C., or O.W.) writes. . . .”

A close friend who actually compiles obituaries for an eminent daily newspaper found herself in a train one day sitting opposite one of her subjects. Although they knew each other, he buried himself in official documents and refused to talk. Rather miffed, she opened her brief-case and resumed work on his file.

Paradoxically, an obituary-writer has no interest in seeing his or her work in print. If the subject lives on and achieves more, the writer has more to write about—for further fees. If death is nature’s way of telling a man to slow down, it’s a sign to the writer that one small source of income has, er, dried up. It’s also a guarantee—short of the supernatural—that the subject will never know what his obituarists thought of him.

To some, that may be a blessing; but it’s always seemed to me like a banquet without the guest of honour. Once or twice, it’s true, reports of people’s deaths have been greatly exaggerated, and the victims have had the rare privilege of reading their own obituaries. I’ve sometimes thought that it might be worthwhile to emulate John Stonehouse and leave one’s clothes on some lonely beach in the hope of attending one’s own memorial service, heavily disguised. There’s surely a story for Jeffrey Archer in the possible *dénouement*—posthumous attacks so scathing that their victim decides on suicide.

One solution might be to publish obituaries during their subjects’ lifetimes—at the onset of a dangerous illness, say, or on attaining a venerable age. Politicians and writers are frequently interviewed, profiled, and re-evaluated on or around their 70th, 80th, or 90th birthdays: why not award them early obituaries, too? Scholarly *Festschriften* in honour of eminent professors usually appear when those honoured become *Emeritus*: that might act as a similar peg or trigger. So might knighthoods, peerages, and Congressional medals. Premature necrology could be the ultimate accolade.

But even that would not work for the victims of short, sharp illnesses or fatal accidents. For them, and for people in general, whether eminent or not, the only real solution is for their friends and admirers to be far less bashful about expressing their appreciation while the subjects are alive. I know: it sounds like Pollyanna, eternally looking on the bright side, oozing plastic flattery, endlessly parroting “Brilliant!” and “Have a nice day!” But I have in mind more than just verbal grooming. Four people I cared about have recently died quite unexpectedly, and I wish very much now that those of us who knew and liked them had done more to tell them so while there was still time. Obituaries are only *l’esprit de l’escalier* by comparison with what should have been said.

THE BEST KNOWN of the four, in Britain, was the TV presenter Russell Harty. I had first met him when he was a radio producer at the BBC. He exuded fun and irreverence. In repose, his face looked like a large baked potato: but it was hardly ever still. Mischievous eyes darting, quick tongue delivering sly recondite words in a flat, pouncing Northern accent, he seemed to incarnate the word imp. And he could be impudent. In his very first shows as a television interviewer, he disrupted the clipboard format with sudden, impulsive questions like “Why do you wear such a very wide tie?” His producers must have tensed at the danger; but Russell was so likeable, so modest of manner, that no one took offence. He had been a schoolmaster, a teacher of English; and like some of the best in his broadcasting profession, he was obviously very much more than a media man. Not that he despised broadcasting, or trifled with it, or did it only with the left hand, so to speak: he was doggedly and thoroughly serious about the craft. What he knew, however, and showed his audience, was that the craft *is* a craft, the medium *is* a medium: neither is an end in itself. Millions responded to his personal blend of concern and humour, wit and insecurity, stubbornness and ability to listen. No one

felt that he was acting, only that he had acquired the technique of naturalness, so cruelly difficult under the camera's gaze.

When a friend or acquaintance becomes a celebrity, there's always a spell of awkwardness. Will he or she be changed, spoiled, corrupted? Will overtures be welcome—or suspect, a poor relation latching on to the star? Will one's own feelings have been tainted by glamour? How genuine can the relationship now be?

With Russell Harty there was no such problem: he was the same in any setting, and genuine all through. My one regret is that the last time I saw him, at dinner with a friend from the theatre world, I was deep in a depressing bout of influenza, and thoroughly dull. I never responded adequately; I never expressed my affection; and an obituary is no substitute for what was never said.

I FEEL THE SAME about Mark Boxer. I had known him far longer, but seen him less recently. At Cambridge, in the 1950s, we had been friends and, in a sense, colleagues: we had both been involved with *Granta*, then an undergraduate magazine. As its editor, he had been rusticated for publishing a poem deemed blasphemous. His friends had organised a mock funeral—and he had returned on the stroke of midnight, later, to attend a May Ball.

That story appeared in the obituaries. What they omitted was the fate of *Granta*. Banned by the university authorities, it had immediately reappeared as *The Gadfly*—the title it had begun with, many years earlier: it had changed to *Granta* when the original *Gadfly* itself had been banned.

My role in the publication had been as a sketch-writer and occasional cartoonist. Mark, as well as editor, was cartoonist-in-chief. His eccentric, elegant distortions of human appearance, thick bold lines alternating with thin, were matched by the sharp wit of his captions. Already, in his twenties, he had formed the style which made him nationally known, a worthy successor to Nicolas Bentley and Osbert Lancaster.

Even at Cambridge he had seemed a dandy, parading the slightly androgynous languor that was then in fashion: large, dark eyes, dark curly hair, and fluid gestures. He remained what would later be called “trendy”: but those who saw only that aspect of Mark Boxer missed a lot. He was private as well as sociable, and an idealist as well as a wit. Most of all, he was both hard-working and serious—the antithesis of his clichéd persona. Having remade *Granta* at Cambridge, he made and remade national magazines. He was an incisive editor, with interests far broader than mere layout, make-up, and artwork, although in those he excelled. Again, I should have expressed the admiration that buttressed my affection for him; but again, his death took me by surprise.

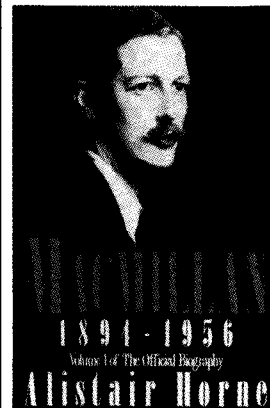
Another Cambridge friend was Basil de Ferranti, better known as “Boz”. His computer expertise, his Conservative enthusiasm, his championship of Europe, his “Kangaroo Group” and *Kangaroo News* for hopping across frontiers long before 1992—even his devoted work as an MEP—were the public aspects of a very private man. His friends remember him as a skilful sailor, a source of wisdom, and a bouncing,

ebullient, modest companion. His death, too, although long dreaded, came too suddenly at the end.

Still more surprising, and appalling, was the death—by accidental electrocution—of David Watt. I first met him in the early 1960s, some years after the attack of poliomyelitis which left him stiff and awkward, but about which he had written with humour as well as courage. Slight and boyish, with quizzical eyes behind large spectacles, he had a voice which belied his appearance: normally light, it could go surprisingly deep, even gruff. His first job as a journalist had been as drama critic of *The Spectator*; I knew him best as a shrewd political correspondent, mainly with *The Financial Times*. For five years he was Director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, where I admired his diplomatic skill at meetings of its governing Council. Although so young in appearance, he was more than a match for some of the shaggy old dons and bankers; and when he was called upon to impersonate the Rt Hon. James Callaghan, then the Prime Minister, in television reconstructions of Cabinet debates, he showed great authority—and the edge of his gruffer voice.

DAVID WATT could be no less witty than Mark Boxer, and his judgment of character was equally shrewd. Both—it may seem surprising—were by instinct Social Democrats, born of the post-War liberal consensus among a whole generation of Britons. Today, with neo-conservatism in the ascendant and many liberal shibboleths in question, the post-War consensus may have a faintly period air. But to see it at its most persua-

MACMILLAN 1894-1956 VOLUME I ALISTAIR HORNE



The eagerly awaited official biography of one of the most complex and fascinating political figures of the Twentieth Century by the distinguished, prize-winning historian Alistair Horne.

M
MACMILLAN
LONDON

£16.95

sive, read the selection of David Watt's writings which Ferdinand Mount has compiled under the appropriate title *The Inquiring Eye*.¹

"By background and temperament [he wrote in his last column for *The Financial Times*] I share all the values and fears of J. S. Mill. But journalism imposes other values of its own—a belief in public discussion, a distrust of closed societies, and a belief that ordinary people can be persuaded (contrary to Mill's expectations) to act rationally and farsightedly if things are adequately explained. That is why the political event which has given me most pleasure in ten years was the referendum on the EEC. We shall not solve the problems of modern society by government diktat. The distribution of power and wealth and amenity is too complex and too sensitive to be encompassed either by paternalism or by a return to *laissez-faire*. The only alternatives are education, persuasion, debate, trust."

In his Sainte-Beuve Lecture in 1976 he wrote:

"There are three basic operations involved. The first is the discovery of people's needs; the second is the business of persuading them that yours is the appropriate way of meeting those needs; the third is the simultaneous process of persuasion and discovery by which you as a politician and they as citizens react to the assessment of what you are in the process of doing or have already done. . . .

The proper criticism of modern politicians is not that they 'politick' too much but that they do not do it enough, or at least not effectively enough. You may well expect this diagnosis to be a prelude to an impassioned plea for a greater degree of participation, devolution and the like in our lives; or (if you are particularly cynical and have taken note of my trade as a journalist) you may anticipate a pitch for open government and the repeal of the Official Secrets Act. If I were a television man, I would probably spend the rest of my time urging the televising of Parliament. As it happens, I am in favour of all these things, but the point I wish to make here is a rather more general one.

¹ *The Inquiring Eye: A Selection of the Writings of David Watt*. Edited by FERDINAND MOUNT. Penguin, £9.95.

It is that politics in this country has become quarantined from the society. . . .

In the nineteenth century, politics was broadly coterminous with the culture. . . . The institutions of British politics—the club-like atmosphere of the House of Commons, constitutional conventions governing ministerial responsibility, the organisation and recruitment of the higher Civil Service—are all based upon the proposition that our affairs are still run in this way. But, alas, this is not so. Society no longer accepts the assumptions of the middle classes and it follows that the institutions have got to be opened up so that political communication on a wider scale can be set in motion. . . ."

What he had in mind was more movement between politics and other walks of life; better communications; less secrecy; more participation in political activity; less sense that Nanny knows best. But his "alas" in the last paragraph quoted suggests that David Watt was also a touch nostalgic for the days when a professional élite and an educated minority could be trusted to captain the ship.

I should have liked to argue this out with David. But on 27 March 1987, trying to get back to London from the country for a necessary session on the respirator that kept him alive, he found his driveway blocked by a power cable brought down by a storm. Assured that the power was off, he picked it up—and was killed outright.

I mourn David Watt, as I mourn Mark Boxer, Boz, and Russell Harty. I mourn the inability to tell them, now, what their obituarists have written, too late for them to read: how much they were valued, how much they are missed. What did all four have in common? Not some floating attributed epigram, but a humanity and breadth far beyond the scope of their professions. Russell Harty, the broadcaster, was a teacher and a seeker. Mark Boxer, the draughtsman and editor, had his own vision of a good and just society. Basil de Ferranti, the MEP, had the priceless gift of listening, caring, and creating warmth around him. And David Watt, the journalist, was a profound and learned observer of more than the passing political scene. We should have had the courage to say so before.

M

Many are Called but Few are Chosen

When you're sorting out poems for what they call "a new collection" you get into a kind of children's book wonderland, there's a war between the Throwouts and the Thinkabouts and little fantasy paper voices are raised, clamouring for selection. . . .

or, if you think about it differently, they're like cats at a Cat Show in their cages; (as it were) there are workaday tabbies and Persians,

all different but all cats, none of them the Dogs of Prose; they lie on their backs, with tummy-tickling hopes, avid for those pages!

But all this is subjective and twee and fanciful, poems are just collections of words on paper, they don't shout "Include me in!" or "Include me out!", they never say "We really want no flipping part of it!"—you have to use *your* "skill and judgment", it's a *critical* caper!

Gavin Ewart

**“ IT
GIVES
ME
GREAT
PLEASURE ”**

This comment on ENCOUNTER echoes that of many readers who replied to our recent Gallup Readership Survey. “Consistently interesting”, “a monthly intellectual treat”, “gets better by the year” . . . such comments sum up ENCOUNTER’s continuing appeal.

**SPECIAL
BONUS
OFFER**

So why not share this interest with your friends this Christmas? A year’s subscription to ENCOUNTER at our special Christmas gift rate saves you no less than 25% of the usual price. Moreover, if you give four or more subscriptions we will renew your own subscription for a further year absolutely free.* This applies both to new Christmas gift subscriptions and renewals of any you gave last year.

And think of all the hassle this will save you – no crowded shopping, no parcel packing and posting. We look after everything.

You’ll find an order form overleaf. Please return it to us well before Christmas.

The present with pleasure in mind.

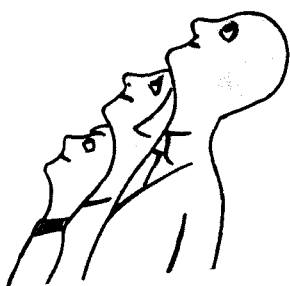
*If you are not already a subscriber, we will start a year’s subscription for you at no cost to you whatsoever when you order four or more gift subscriptions.

NOTES & TOPICS

London Commentary

The Preoccupation with Equality

Drabble's Rabble—By KENNETH MINOGUE



THE NEWS OF a projected socialist dining club in London has raised hopes that Left-wing thought might at last begin to sprout again in the dull rain of Thatcherite prosperity. There is certainly a grand tradition to draw on, and as Dr Johnson remarked, people need more to be reminded than to be informed. But if these sprouts are

to develop, socialist thinkers had better recognise that the landscape has changed out of all recognition. Some familiar socialist moves are gone forever: nationalisation for example. When it comes to weeding out principles, the position isn't as clear cut, but a good place to start would be Egalitarianism, and a good text Margaret Drabble's recent Fabian pamphlet.

Her *Case for Equality*¹ comes deceptively dressed as the record of a never-forgotten love affair ("There is still something in me that hankers after the old, sweeping, all-embracing, passionate egalitarianism of yesteryear . . ."). Its autobiographical elements include a disquisition on how the poor are these days priced out of oysters, which are much cheaper in New Zealand. The heart of her pamphlet is George Bernard Shaw's conviction that everybody ought to have the same income, but its head is John Rawls's argument that inequalities can only be justified in terms of benefits to all members of society. The charm of her performance did not save it from being savaged by Brian Walden (in his column in *The Sunday Times*) as "slavery dressed up as compassion". Miss Drabble, in reply, indignantly claimed to have been traduced. She had her dream. What could possibly be wrong with that?

The answer is that equality, like arsenic, has contradictory effects. In moderation a tonic, it becomes poisonous when indulged to excess. Equality is the basis of our law, and saturates our language and our manners to a degree far beyond any other civilisation. But to "equalise" the material things people enjoy must involve severing all connection between human conduct on the one hand and material things on the

other. An old socialist argument used to advocate redistribution by pointing out that the original distribution had been unfair. Inherited wealth symbolised basic injustice. But no one now doubts that if, *per impossible*, the wealth of the country were redistributed, the old inequalities would rapidly revive. Only the dead weight of a massively despotic power could sustain such equality. Capitalism (as the Chinese have most recently been illustrating) comes terribly naturally to people. Loosen only a little the rack of socialism, and they're off into truck, barter, and exchange. Why else, one must ask, does Miss Drabble think that egalitarians like Stalin, Pol Pot, and Mao got up to the things they did? The rationale of the killing fields was the creation of a new society whose superiority lay, precisely, in its equality.

The dreamers of such dreams are often enticed along a path over which hangs the motto that he or she who wills the end must will the means. All that Miss Drabble really intends by her egalitarianism is that everybody should live (oysters and all) at the level we do in Hampstead. This charming hope for the human race has to be transposed but slightly into the idiom of abstract political theory, and it can begin to do terrible things to the judgments of those who entertain it.

It is a significant paradox that egalitarians feel superior to other people. In Miss Drabble's case, this takes the form of claiming to be more imaginative than "politicians and legislators". And yet the reader of this pamphlet can only be left open-mouthed at the real collapse of imagination it exhibits. By the simple fiat of decreeing equal incomes to everyone, she not merely evades the question of how this might be attained, but actually abolishes the economy, which depends upon people choosing to produce things according to the incentives available. It happens that the point at which Miss Drabble's imagination flickers and dies can be pinpointed exactly; and it is only if socialists can be helped gently over this stile that they may discover the kind of interesting new landscape which might be of benefit to us all. It occurs when Miss Drabble writes:

"I would admit, perhaps, that some of the so-called socialist states of our century have set less than inspiring examples—but have the capitalists done much better?"

The phrase "less than inspiring" rivets the attention as, it must be said, a monumental piece of obfuscation. We are

¹ *A Case for Equality*. By MARGARET DRABBLE. Fabian Tract 527, £1.00. Available from The Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN.

talking, after all, of the slaughter of millions, all done for the revolutionary dream, the cause of creating equality. To ask whether, say, Britain has or has not "done better" than this exhibits an obtuseness for which I cannot find an adequate superlative. It may be that Miss Drabble's wits have been unhinged by the contemporary rhetoric which tends to describe the monster Thatcher in the same terms as Hitler, Stalin, *et al.*² But unless she can push beyond these imaginative barriers, she will certainly deserve the hard, polemical touch of the Brian Waldens.

The crucial mistake results from thinking that the words

² I originally wrote this as a piece of irony. But on 11 September, the *New York Times* magazine published an interview with Miss Drabble in which it was reported that

"She was in Canada where some British official reprimanded her for misrepresenting England in her novels, making the country appear run down and shabby. . . . She was shocked at this attempt to censor her."

The slide from a critical remark to a "reprimand" which turns into censorship illustrates an interesting set of mind.

"Capitalism" and "Socialism" describe the same *kind* of thing. Sometimes this mistake is further compounded by moralising the false identification, in which case "Capitalism" stands for greedy and selfish behaviour, while "Socialism" is actually equivalent to goodness. The enfeeblement of Left-wing thought in contemporary Britain can be placed in terms of its collapse into a muddled moralism. Until these confusions are untangled, it is safe to say that those who want to emphasise the deficiencies of contemporary Western life will find nothing serious to say.

"Capitalism" began its life as the successor to Marx's "bourgeois society". It was a denigratory word to describe a modern European state, whose essential feature was thought to be the fact that individuals could spend their money as they chose. Such a society, like all societies before it, contained rich and poor. On the other hand, the total wealth of these new capitalist societies was constantly leaping ahead; and their democratic political practices encouraged the fantasy despot in us all. The property rights which formalised this inequality of wealth between rich and poor were regarded by some people as so unjust as to be unreal. Nothing could stop

Caring about Compassion



MANY British writers seem determined to live in internal exile, from which vantage point they curse modern society. The impression they give the world is that Britain is characterised by squalor and deprivation. Rarely do they make positive

proposals, so it is rewarding to read the Fabian Society's pamphlet, "Case for Equality", the text of a speech by Margaret Drabble, the novelist.

I must begin by admitting that I am often rebuked for taking seriously the political opinions of artists. An old acquaintance wrote to me recently, urging me to abandon the subject.

He says of Left-wing artists:

"What society and what epoch has ever pleased them? Apart from a certain devotion to Stalin—whom Picasso once assured me was a saint—I have never known them to be satisfied by any system. Don't you realise that they are self-indulgent poseurs, whose discontent is a necessary part of their creative process?"

I REJECT this dismissive approach. The brutalities of socialism may be the fault of politicians, but the radiant glow around the doctrine was put there by writers. Capitalism cannot bury their ideas under a pile of consumer durables. It is important to argue with Drabble, rather than ignore her.

She offers us nothing less than a society in which everybody has an identical portion of wealth. She regards all forms of equality as a delusion, except equality of income. She quotes with approval George Bernard Shaw's dictum: "The fact is that you cannot equalise anything about human beings except their income."

Nor does she conceal her motivation:

"There is still something in me that hankers after the

old, sweeping, all-embracing, egalitarianism of yesteryear."

Drabble needs political convictions that make her feel good. Their practicality is secondary.

DRABBLE ALSO BELIEVES that more for everybody, "paradoxically does mean worse for us all". This eccentric opinion is rooted in her raging snobbery. She gives an extraordinarily long list of goods which she claims are purchased by "our present plutocracy", and which she deplores as tasteless.

As a member of the plutocracy, I may say that I do not possess any of these items and suspect her knowledge of the non-socialist part of the nation does not extend far beyond London's yuppies.

SHE IS MUCH EXERCISED by the growth of private health insurance, burglar alarms, and guard dogs. These, too, are the grotesque blossoms of consumer capitalism, "the offspring of fear".

She thinks that every disadvantage suffered by individuals is imposed upon them by society.

Her tone of moral and intellectual superiority leaves no room for the idea that the world has possessed great and noble minds who opposed everything she views as self-evidently right.

SHE WONDER what aspect of her background makes it easy for her to "identify downwards", or is it that as a writer "imagination is my trade?" I can solve this one for her. She doesn't identify downwards. Oh yes, she feels for the broken, timid, passive dependents in society. But she does not examine the possibilities of self-improvement because her ideology does not assign it much of a role in life. Which is why I think it is vital that her depressing determinism should be rebutted. We can do without slavery dressed up as compassion.

Brian Walden

in THE SUNDAY TIMES (London)

politics turning into a clash of dreamers, all bewitched by the marvellous things they thought state power could do with the national wealth.

It would perhaps be naive to ask: why not persuade the rich themselves to redistribute their property to the poor? But there is in fact nothing like a naive question for revealing realities obscured by people who rush on to show how sophisticated they are. It is evident that very many rich and affluent people are egalitarians. It is also a fact that the thing called a "capitalist" society has no basic characteristic except that people can do what they like with their own money. Nothing prevents groups of people setting up cooperatives and communes in which increasingly, by voluntary recognition of an evident superiority, more and more people could be drawn into a socialist and egalitarian way of life. Why not *demonstrate* the superiority of socialism?

This question, it seems to me, points a dagger at the heart of the egalitarian dream. Why is it that the redistribution of wealth must be carried out by the power of the state, a power whose authority to compel rests upon the inexorable necessities of order rather than such optional fantasies as that of egalitarianism? Why is it that some socialists regard a vote for a redistributionist party as an act which triumphs morally over the selfish propensities of mankind—when the most obvious such triumph would be the direct giving of their wealth and their attention to the poor?

Marx himself recognised the deadliness of such questions; and his solution was that capitalism had so debased human nature that it would require nothing less than a trauma called a "Revolution" before we would all be fit to live the way we ought to. The basic difficulty is, thus, that once the social critic has taken the first step into believing that equality is the social ideal, he or she can hardly help taking the second step, which is to construe our current form of life in terms of a melodrama. Political disagreement about what it is best to do turns into moral dispute, separating benevolent idealists from greedy and evil capitalists. And from this stage on, in the typical evolution of thought, it becomes hard not to have some sympathy with the violence of despots who want to purify society of such greed.

The basic asymmetry, then, is that "Capitalism" has produced the possibility of a great variety of forms of life, which depend on individuals choosing how to earn and spend their own money, while "Socialism" stands for a single way of life in which the basic distribution of resources is determined by the state. Man is said to be a "social animal", and each individual is merely the reflector of the cultural resources of his society. It sounds charming—but ideas like this often have surprising consequences. One consequence of this doctrine is that anyone who wants to leave such a society is obviously taking with him the skills and sensibilities with which society has equipped him.

Emigration, in other words, is theft. And this has long been official Soviet doctrine. It is the metaphysics of the Berlin Wall, which, unlike all other walls in history, was not built to keep people *out*. It means that "socialism", in its fully developed form, is a prison. Nor is this merely some tendentious invention of capitalist hermeneutics. The notorious problem of these egalitarian societies is that large numbers of their in-

habitants want to bolt, and they can only be kept in place by force. Capitalist states "less than inspiring"? Miss Drabble, like any other inhabitant of Britain, can bolt whenever it takes her fancy. But the astonishing thing is that while many people are theoretically in favour of equality, none of them wants to go off and live in an egalitarian society; and very few of them make any attempt actually to set up little pools of equality in the here-and-now.

Miss Drabble's actions clearly make more sense than her words. But her words give plenty of clues to the character of this gap between the actual life and the dreams it accommodates. It is hard to live in a capitalist society, possibly in any society, without recognising how kaleidoscopically things change their value, how the will becomes attached to small things which gain their value from context. One must recognise that human life has a ludic quality which often runs counter to the simple socialist preoccupation with who-is-getting-how-much.

But Miss Drabble's imagination pulls up short at this hurdle. Hers is a world of single-valued "privileges" and "advantages". Life is simple: Mummy giving every child the same ration of Smarties. She complains that a boy born into a family of daughters "becomes the adored recipient of all the advantages that are still heaped upon boys rather than girls, even in the most socialist-feminist, the most would-be egalitarian of households." And she adds: "every family has its own pattern of injustices. . . ." Ah, justice—let's have a recount of the Smarties!

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

Mass Suicide à la français



ACCORDING TO OUR National Institute of Demographic Studies (INED), French people did rather less dying in 1987 than they had in the previous few years. Those of us who are still around ought to know that we owe this gratifying achievement to improved health cover (slanders to the contrary notwithstanding); a mild winter (less flu and pneumonia); and a drop in the number of road accidents.

Satisfaction over the latter statistic, however, needs to be qualified. Deaths on French roads between 1972 and 1987 may have fallen from 16,000 to fewer than 10,000 per annum, but the result still puts France among the countries where motor cars kill the most people. Great Britain, Japan, Sweden, and Norway have all recorded figures for deaths per hundred-million vehicle-kilometres (the scientific way of counting them) that are as much as 20 times lower than ours.

And the number of deaths has just risen again—sharply—to 18% (expressed as an average over the year) in the first four months of 1988.

As a consequence, our Home Secretary, Minister of Works, and Road Safety Squad decided recently, on the eve of the great summer-holiday blood-letting, to launch a campaign “*de sensibilisation et de répression*”. Such campaigns are launched regularly and produce results—though only for a while; before long the curve starts to rise again. The way to keep it falling would be to look beyond seasonal campaigns and adopt sustained measures to bring about a permanent change in the number one cause of death on the roads, namely the way the French drive.

Over the past 30 years bad driving, which is behind nine accidents out of ten, has in round numbers dumped some seven million victims on the asphalt. Of those, 350,000 were dead (the figure does not include victims who died more than 6 days after their accident) and 6,600,000 injured, of whom a third were left permanently disabled, paralysed, or mentally handicapped. What makes such human losses even more shocking, from the point of view of the national community, is the fact that it is in the 15-to-25 age-range that our roads take their heaviest toll. For a country with a declining birth-rate and *le vieillissement* giving it a steadily-ageing population profile, this haemorrhage of youth asks to be seen as an act of compound suicide. Did you know that three-quarters of deaths among 15-to-25-year-olds result from traffic accidents? Tragically and agonisingly spectacular though the recent accident at Paris’s Gare de Lyons and that of the shooting down of an Airbus over the Persian Gulf have been, as causes of death they pale into statistical insignificance beside the average weekend on our roads.

Macabre demagogic pressures deter anyone from coming down hard on motorcyclists: and they go unrestrained and unpunished as they weave their death-defying zigzags between queues of crawling cars or ignore one-way streets by using the bus lanes. . . .

So the age pyramid continues to stand itself on its head among the population at large, while settling back on its base in the resuscitation rooms of our hospitals. And it is not just the open road and the motorway that kill; many traffic-accident victims meet their fate in our towns—for reasons that are plain to see.

RESEARCH CONSULTANTS

Leading academics

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Experienced honours graduates

TRANSLATORS

Qualified, most European languages

ARCHIVISTS

Editing and indexing by word processor

Research Assistance Routledge Associates
4 Lauriston Road, London SW19 4TQ
Phone 01-947 9375

France is a truly “Cartesian” country in the sense that we are capable of using arguments of impeccable rigour that nevertheless bear no relation to reality. For example, Robert Badinter’s decision as *garde des Sceaux* (Keeper of the Great Seal), that the pedestrian, when he is run over, is invariably in the right, constituted an abstraction having little practical relevance. Since then urban pedestrians have behaved in a more and more anarchic fashion while motorists, with ever-increasing barbarity, disregard the lights at insane speeds with an even greater disregard for human life. The plain fact is that virtually nowhere in France will you find a traffic policeman on hand to penalise such cynical drivers or instil a sense of discipline into foolhardy pedestrians.

OF ALL THE CAPITALS I know, Paris is the one where you find the fewest policemen on permanent traffic duty, ready to intervene as soon as any irregularity occurs—such as a vehicle waiting in the middle of a street for several minutes for no apparent reason. At certain periods of very heavy traffic—between 10 a.m. and noon, for example—whole *arrondissements* are deserted as far as traffic police are concerned. Drivers can do anything and get away with it.

We French are very proud of our road signs—and they would indeed be excellent if everyone travelled by ox-cart. As it is, signs are very often positioned in such a way that a driver doing between 90 and 130 k.p.h. cannot read them until it is too late to make his turn. He still makes the attempt, suddenly and without warning, in a move that more often than not goes badly. Most of our European neighbours use multiple, repeated signs, staggered to warn drivers well in advance, or inscriptions on the road surface—written in enormous letters, quite unlike the visiting-card format favoured by our French road-sign experts.

This lack of common sense is again in evidence in the way we plan our supervision of road traffic. The authorities are undoubtedly quite right to mobilise exceptional forces during the holiday period; but discipline only becomes habitual with drivers when supervision and penalisation are carried out on a regular, daily basis over a wide area. I know a village where two policemen have concealed themselves in exactly the same place between high noon and 2 p.m. every Saturday for the past 25 years, taking the name of every driver who exceeds the local speed limit of 40 k.p.h. Everyone but foreign tourists knows about it. All around, people are at liberty to slaughter one another on the country roads—particularly youngsters. In fact, it is on the *routes départementales* that one encounters some of the most dangerous driving: excessive speeds, turning corners on the wrong side of the road, and drivers refusing to give way, have together meant that, in the region I am talking about, few families have not had at least one member killed or seriously injured in the course of the last 25 years.

There is no difference, either morally or from the point of view of the danger to others, between the maniac who starts shooting at passers-by and the lorry driver who, drunk or sober, contravenes the Code and causes an accident. If you

ask me, he ought to lose his licence permanently *and* have a fixed term in prison (and the same should apply if he is shown to have been driving while drunk, even if he has not caused an accident). Does that seem harsh? But again, what is at stake are hundreds of human lives, not to mention hundreds of thousands of limbs. Is it altogether normal to hear so frequently on the radio that “a heavy goods vehicle has overturned”? It is hard enough to overturn the family jalopy; imagine the acrobatics an articulated lorry must have to go through to accomplish such a feat! Have we any right to tolerate the driver of such a vehicle treating the lives of other road-users so lightly? Why, indeed, do we make so light of the carnage on France’s roads—calmly mentioning, as if it were some humdrum mechanical breakdown, an act which, in my view, is in every way comparable to that of a terrorist planting a bomb in a department store.

As part of the “awareness-building campaign” we have been shown on television the “perfect police car”, equipped with radar and a camera, engaged in trailing and subsequently booking a driver who, on a dead-straight road, has been travelling at 150 k.p.h. (rather than 130). Fine, but how many of those vehicles are there actually around? And did the whole spectacle have anything but a purely symbolic value? To the road-hogs who daily dodge in-and-out of the traffic at 200 k.p.h., endangering other people’s lives by cutting in front of cars to overtake indiscriminately on the outside or inside, that bit of TV-film will not have held much of a threat. Have they not enjoyed for years the right to kill or maim their fellow-citizens entirely undisturbed, far from the eyes and ears of the police?

The drive for *surveillance et répression* announced by the authorities will reduce the loss of life only if it is part of a sustained operation and if—more than that—it is accompanied by action in depth. The driving bans imposed on “dangerous drivers” ought to be longer—up to five or six years, if not for life. Moreover, I feel that there needs to be a psychological campaign, a public-education offensive aimed at improving French people’s behaviour on the road and civilising their attitude towards the motor car.

LIKE ALL EDUCATION, it ought to begin at school. From time to time over the last 20 or 30 years there has been talk of an experiment designed to initiate children in the problems of driving. We are shown a teacher explaining the rudiments of the Highway Code. . . . As happens too often in our country, however, that isolated experiment, having had its moment of glory, sinks back into the sea of initiatives that are never followed up—until the next, equally transitory resurrection. What we need is a methodical course of instruction, dealing with the difficulties and dangers of traffic in town and country. Our pre-adolescents must be given an overall vision of the problems and pitfalls of driving, backed by films and graphics. They must be presented with concrete

cases highlighting the commonest accidents and their causes. They must also have instilled into them a sense of responsibility at the wheel, and to this end they must be made acquainted not only with accident statistics but with the human, social and economic costs implicit in them.

Finally, I am convinced it would be a good thing if we cooled our whole approach to the motor car. Youngsters should be told that it’s a useful tool on a par with the fridge, the microwave oven, and the washing-up machine and that it is puerile to invest one’s virility in it or one’s “macho” urge to perform heroic deeds. The sickening phenomenon of young people staging races when they come out of the pub on a Saturday night, goading and challenging one another to see who will be first to reach the next village, is an instance of primitive behaviour that should be held up to ridicule. The mentality involved is stuck at the Neanderthal level, and it is the moral and civic duty of the educator to prevent it from crystallising into action. I note another case recently of half-a-dozen adolescents in the Amiens region paying with their lives for one of these stupid, murderous duels, in an episode that was as disturbing in its mindlessness as it was typical of our current mores.

I am afraid that television advertising encourages this primitive mentality in the driver. It does so very skilfully, presenting extravagant feats one after another which bear no relation to everyday life or—more to the point, alas—to everyday death. Cars are shown hurtling at the speed of Concorde across Saharan or hyperborean wastes and in and out of enchanted grottoes, racing everything from high-speed trains to panthers, raging forest-fires and tidal waves. . . .

The motor car, that commonplace tool whose only utility is to enable you to park your backside on a cushion and convey it from Angoulême to Romorantin at an average speed of 70 k.p.h., is transformed by the advertisers into the flaming sword of the superman’s will to power. I fully accept that all good advertising includes an element of dream. But it ought to retain some link with tangible reality. No one buys a Renault 5 in order to leap the crater of Popocatepetl. Maybe that kind of psychological immaturity lies at the root of the majority of road deaths.

Ensuring discipline behind the wheel and educating tomorrow’s drivers are both functions that can, without a shadow of doubt, be laid at the door of the state and nowhere else. Unfortunately, while the French state delights in meddling in every sphere where it has no competence to act, it has a horror of meeting what amount to its natural obligations. One must heartily agree with what ministers are currently saying about their belated intention to wage “merciless war” on the irresponsible driver. But when Richelieu decided that the unfortunate 18th-century obsession with duelling that was draining France of her life-blood just had to cease, he did not confine himself to flimsy declarations of principle. He did what had to be done to stop it, and he succeeded. I wonder if we can goad our readers into showing proof of the same kind of perseverance and determination?

Politics & World Affairs

The Politics of Personality

The American Presidency—By VERNON BOGDANOR



THE MODERN American Presidency, declares Fred Greenstein in his valuable collection of essays,¹ begins with Franklin Delano Roosevelt. There had, it is true, been Presidents before FDR—Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson spring to mind—who had seemed to embody the spirit of the American people, but the majority of Presidents remained content with a more restricted interpretation of their role. Since FDR, however, it has been natural for the President to become a central symbol for public emotions and aspirations. During the 1970s, many of those who had hitherto welcomed the build-up of Presidential power—Arthur Schlesinger Jr is a notable example—warned of the dangers of the Imperial Presidency;² while Congress, reeling under the impact of Viet Nam and Watergate, sought to reimpose constitutional constraints upon Presidential power. But the centrality of the Presidency in American political life has hardly been dented. Indeed, Presidential powers which, in FDR's time, were thought of as exceptional, are now taken entirely for granted, and conservative opponents of government intervention seek to capture the White House, not to contain it.

It is not difficult to account for the rise of presidentialism. The 1930s were a period in which strong executive action, both at home and abroad, was essential if democracy was to be saved. The New Deal and, later, the exigencies of World War II and post-War containment, required continuous and not sporadic Presidential leadership. This was understood not only by Truman, but also by Eisenhower, despite the fact

that he was elected on a Republican platform which opposed Big Government and Big Bureaucracy. Indeed, it was under Eisenhower that two of the most striking features of the modern Presidency—the bureaucratisation of the office, and its plebiscitary, monarchical nature—came to the fore.

For above and beyond the contingent forces of 20th-century politics which have made the Presidency what it is, there is a deeper factor at work—the democratisation of American life. The people, it appeared, needed a leader with whom they could identify, and the whole machinery of American publicity was devoted to ensuring that this need could be satisfied. The President became an elected monarch, an anointed king whose role of political leadership had to be carried out within a monarchical framework—a conception of the Presidency which, since FDR, only Reagan, and perhaps Eisenhower, have really understood. It is probably no accident that Reagan and Eisenhower are also the only Presidents since FDR who would have been able to win a third term of office had the American Constitution permitted them to do so.

THIS MUTATION in the nature of the Presidency would have come as a surprise to the classical theorists of American government. James Madison thought of the American Constitution as providing balanced government so as to avoid the dangers of unconstitutional power as displayed by George III. Tocqueville believed that, with the development of democracy, the President would become more dependent upon Congress, not less; while James Bryce in *The American Commonwealth*, first published just one hundred years ago, wrote a chapter entitled “Why Great Men Are Not Chosen Presidents”. Yet the history of 20th-century democratic governments, of which the United States is the exemplar, shows that personal leadership has been at least as important a factor as ideology or class interest in securing the political allegiance of broad masses of people. This is not to say that the issues themselves are of no importance, only that they need to be embodied in a person—a Roosevelt or a Reagan—before they can carry conviction.

Recent trends have only served to emphasise the plebiscitary nature of the office of the Presidency. These trends are brilliantly discussed in Gerald M. Pomper's collection of

¹ *Leadership in the Modern Presidency*. Edited by FRED I. GREENSTEIN. Harvard University Press, \$35.95, £23.95.

Also worthy of note, although of far more ephemeral interest, are *The U.S. Election*. By MICHAEL LEAPMAN. (Coronet Books, £2.95), a straightforward guide to the mechanics of the electoral process; and *Reagan's Reign of Error*. By MARK GREEN and GAIL MACCOLL (Random House, £2.95), a collection of Reagan's numerous gaffes and misstatements.

² Compare *The Imperial Presidency* (1973) with Schlesinger's accounts of the Presidencies of Jackson, FDR and Kennedy, *The Age of Jackson* (1946), *The Age of Roosevelt* (1957-60), and *A Thousand Days* (1965) respectively.

essays, *Voters, Elections, and Parties: The Practice of Democratic Theory*,³ one of the best books on American politics to appear in recent years. Pomper draws attention to the increasing concentration upon foreign policy as buttressing the plebiscitary President, since foreign policy seems to call for credibility and competence rather than partisan debate on issues. The Bush/Dukakis battle is less one involving politics—although there are policy differences—than one based upon personal qualities. Who is to be trusted with the nuclear trigger? Which candidate would be more successful in dealing with Mr Gorbachov? And so on. The choice is less between two entirely opposed visions of the world, than one of experience, style and management.

In most democracies, however, the politics of personality is qualified by the exigencies of party. Candidates for high office are generally elected to leadership positions by their legislative colleagues, politicians who are able to screen candidates through a process of peer review. In the United States, this function used to be performed in the "smoke-filled rooms", the meetings of party brokers, bosses and elected leaders. Today, by contrast, the selection of the convention delegates who will nominate the Presidential candidate is made, not by party leaders nor by the voters as a whole, but by that small minority of voters willing to participate in party caucuses and primaries, the most crucial of which are held in small and unrepresentative states such as Iowa and New Hampshire. The screening of candidates is no longer undertaken by party professionals but by campaign consultants and media specialists who decide, on the basis of quite superficial characteristics, whether or not a candidate is electable.

For the consultants, a Reagan or a Quayle is electable, while a Truman or a Lyndon Johnson might now be dismissed as entirely unsuitable. One is inclined to sympathise with Truman's homely and old-fashioned style:

"I wonder how far Moses would have gone if he'd taken a poll of Egypt? What would Jesus Christ have preached if he'd taken a poll in Israel?—It isn't polls or public opinion of the moment that counts. It is right and wrong."⁴

THE NEW RULES of Presidential campaigning offer a premium to those who can establish a direct relationship with individual voters—a Carter or a Reagan rather than a party leader of the Mondale or the Howard Baker type. Jimmy Carter was, in fact, the first politician to understand the novel dynamics of the system. In 1976, he proved that a nationally unknown candidate, with only 2.5% approval among Democratic Party identifiers and hardly any support among Party activists, could win the nomination against the wishes of the old political establishments, the state and local hierarchies. The trouble is not only that a candidate who

³ *Voters, Elections and Parties: The Practice of Democratic Theory*. By GERALD M. POMPER. Transaction Books, \$29.95, £22.00.

⁴ Robert H. Ferrell (ed.), *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (New York, 1980), p. 310.

transaction

LOSING FROM THE INSIDE: THE COST OF CONFLICT IN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

Patricia Lee Sykes

The author traces the development of the SDP from its founding in 1981 to the election of 1987 exploring the nature of elite conflict within parties and showing how internal conflict affects the character of electoral competition between parties.

"... well observed and shrewd. She finds her way with great skill through the byways of personal positions and policy arguments." — The Rt Hon William Rogers.

\$32.95

0-88738-223-1

£23.50

LIBERAL POLITICS IN BRITAIN

Arthur Cyr

An analysis of the Liberal Party, the Social Democratic Party and other developments which cast light on the wider trends of change in the political system. Through careful dissection of the intellectual, structural and sociological aspects of Liberal politics the author explains the continuing role of a centre party against the background of broader changes which are taking place in the United Kingdom.

\$29.95

0-88738-209-6

£22.50

RESHAPING THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

Robert Maxwell, Editor

The National Health Service now commands greater resources than in 1979, despite rapid growth in private health insurance and a Conservative government's preference for private provision of services. This book charts the changes government has brought about in how the NHS is run and concludes with an assessment of the broad policy options facing funded health care in the UK.

\$24.95

0-946-967-18-0

£25.00

RESHAPING NATIONALISED INDUSTRY

Christine Whitehead, Editor

Reshaping of the nationalised industries has been a key element of the Conservative government's programme and those industries remaining in the public sector have been subject to rigorous financial control and external scrutiny. This book questions the degrees of success and failure of this Tory policy since 1979 and addresses the issues of reconciliation of the public interest with private ownership of utilities and the extent to which those industries remaining in public ownership are now efficiently managed.

\$29.95

0-946-967-20-2

£25.00

TRANSACTION PUBLISHERS

Rutgers — The State
University
New Brunswick
N.J. 08903
U.S.A.



The Forley Building
Headley Road East
Woodley
Reading RG5 4DY
U.K.

succeeded by such means would have a tenuous relationship with his Congressional party; there would be no guarantee that a good campaigner also possessed the skills needed to govern. The ability to succeed in winning office under the new rules hardly correlates with the qualities required to construct the legislative coalitions which make for a successful Presidency.

The role of party could be of especial importance in the United States, as a means of overcoming the problems associated with the separation of powers. Parties, it might be suggested, can unite what the Constitution divides, by linking the President with other centres of power, Congress and the constituencies. In 1950, the American Political Science Association issued a resounding call for "a More Responsible Two-Party System" so that the President, aided by his congressional party, could formulate and implement a long-term programme, derived from a coherent set of political beliefs. If that did not happen, the Committee warned, the political system would come to favour a President "who exploits skillfully the arts of demagoguery, who uses the whole country as his political backyard, and who does not mind turning into the embodiment of personal government".⁵

THE TRAGEDY is that while both the decline of geographical sectionalism in the United States and the increasing congruence between party identification and policy preferences have made possible, perhaps for the first time in American history, the development of "a more responsible two-party system"; the parties have become, in a number of respects, weaker and less cohesive. In place of the realignment and revival hoped for by the Committee, the pattern of electoral politics has been one of dealignment and volatility. The problem of how to secure strong government with weak parties has been met by inflating the office of the Presidency. Some would argue that the dangers which the Committee feared have already come to pass. For such blemishes upon the face of American government as Watergate and the Iran-Contra affair offer eloquent evidence of the dangers associated with the aggrandisement of that plebiscitarian institution which the Presidency has become.

Unsustained by party, the President must perforce rely upon his own personal bureaucracy. This has been especially the case with Republican Presidents. Until 1952, no incoming President this century had lacked control of Congress. Since then, however, Eisenhower in 1956, Nixon, Ford and Reagan (in so far as the House is concerned), have each had to deal with a hostile Congress. There may well be a Republican majority at Presidential level, but in Congress, the Democrats remain the natural majority party. Thus, it is only by dissociating himself from party that a Republican candidate can hope to succeed to the Presidency. In 1988, it is the allegiance

of the Reagan Democrats—the white southerners and blue-collar workers who deserted the Democrats for Reagan in 1980 and 1984—which is crucial to the Presidential election, not that of the party stalwarts.

Without party, however, the President must derive his strength from those who own a personal loyalty to him, rather than any wider allegiance to institutions or ideas.

The growth of the White House bureaucracy has been truly formidable. William Hopkins, who became a White House stenographer under Hoover in 1931, retiring in the Nixon years as an executive clerk, remembered shaking hands with Hoover before the President began work every morning in the White House. Indeed, Hoover would personally greet anyone who cared to join the reception line. The White House was guarded only by a low, unelectrified fence and its gates stood open. Anyone who wanted to walk east of the White House from what was then the site of the State, Navy and War departments, generally did so by walking through the White House grounds. The Presidential staff could be accommodated in the West Wing of the White House. By contrast, "The bureaucracy of the modern Presidency now occupies not only the building across the street from the West Wing, but also a red-brick, high-rise New Executive Office Building on 17th Street. Extensions of the Presidency are to be found in many other nearby buildings, including the Georgian-façade edifices facing Lafayette Square."⁶

Nixon, Ford, Carter and Reagan all posed as Presidents who were suspicious of the Washington Establishment and intended to prune wasteful bureaucracy. Yet the inexorable growth continued. Just as the medieval monarch needed his liege lords, so the President required his own personal court of advisers, involved as much, perhaps, in the dissemination of favourable publicity as in the arduous tasks of policy-making. Indeed, Rosalynn Carter, who held no formal position of authority of any kind, employed a staff half as large as FDR's at the height of the Second World War.

DONALD REGAN was one such personal adviser, moving from the Treasury to become Ronald Reagan's Chief of Staff at the beginning of the President's second term in February 1985. An able administrator but no politician, he became the scapegoat for the Iran-Contra affair and was forced to resign in February 1987. *For the Record*,⁷ Regan's kiss-and-tell account of his stewardship, became a best-seller in the United States because it revealed "the most closely guarded domestic secret of the Reagan White House", Nancy Reagan's fixation on astrology. "Virtually every major move and decision was cleared in advance with a woman in San Francisco who drew up horoscopes." It is not clear whether the President himself knew of the existence of "the Friend", as she is coyly labelled throughout the book—Vice-President Bush was unaware of her role until February 1987, shortly before Regan resigned—but, as Regan feelingly writes, "The frustration of dealing with a situation in which the schedule of the President of the United States was determined by occult prognostications was very great—far greater than any other I had known in nearly forty-five years of public life".

⁵ Gerald M. Pomper, *Voters, Elections* . . . , p. 276.

⁶ Fred I. Greenstein, *Leadership* . . . , pp. 297-8. See, also, John Lukacs, *Outgrowing Democracy* (Doubleday, 1984), an idiosyncratic but penetrating history of contemporary America which focuses on some of the trends discussed in this review.

⁷ *For the Record*. By DONALD REGAN. Century-Hutchinson, £16.95, Harcourt Brace, \$21.94.

What might otherwise be dismissed as a rather harmless, even charming, foible, seems to have been symptomatic of the lax methods by which the Reagan Administration conducted its business. The Administration was, for Regan, the Guesswork Presidency, since he never received any guidance from the President as to the goal expected of him. Accustomed to management by objectives, he found himself quite lost in the tangled undergrowth of the public relations jungle that comprised the White House. During his four years as Treasury Secretary, he never saw the President alone, and never discussed either economic philosophy or fiscal or monetary policy on a one-to-one basis.

"From first day to last at Treasury, I was flying by the seat of my pants. The President never told me what he believed or what he wanted to accomplish in the field of economics. I had to figure things out like any other American, by studying his speeches and reading the newspapers. . . .

In our telephone conversation on December 3 [1981, when Regan had been offered the Treasury Secretaryship], the President had said, 'I'll see you in Washington'. To my surprise, that was what he meant—literally. Between my appointment and Inauguration Day there was no summons to California or Blair House, no private meeting in which the President-elect revealed his economic objectives and gave me my instructions as his chief spokesman on economic policy. After I accepted the job, he simply hung up and vanished—I found this disembodied relationship bizarre."

Regan's first appointment with the President came after a telephone call from Nancy, during which the Treasury Secretary indicated that interest rates should be lower.

"'You should tell Ronnie that—quickly', Mrs Reagan said. 'I'll have Mike Deaver put you on the schedule to see him.'

Again I was surprised. The President's wife was going to tell the Deputy Chief of Staff to put the Secretary of the Treasury on the President's schedule so the Secretary of the Treasury could tell the President of his views on the economy?"

In the Reagan Administration there was, apparently, "no design for leadership. There was no inventory of national priorities, no philosophical consensus on which policy was based, no system for carrying a problem that subordinates could not solve to the President for final decision, no provision for the confidentiality without which no friendship, no marriage, no business, and certainly no Presidency can function." The Reagan Administration was, the former Chief of Staff believes, "a great force for good in America and the world", but its "most damning failure" was its "tendency to process the activities of the government into entertainment" and this "constitutes a danger to the democratic process and to the republic itself". If that is the view of one who was formerly a close friend of the President and who shared his fundamental objectives, one can only wonder what the final verdict of history will be. With friends like Donald Regan, Ronald Reagan must be ruefully thinking, there seems no need for enemies.

The Trusteeship Presidency

Jimmy Carter and the United States Congress

CHARLES O. JONES

In this study, the distinguished political scientist Charles O. Jones explores how a president from outside mainstream Washington politics viewed the nature and function of his office. The result is a revealing analysis of a presidency that is only now coming to be reevaluated. Jones's pathfinding book is a signal contribution to that effort. **£19.95**

Miller Center Series on the American Presidency

Also available

Presidential Transitions and Foreign Affairs

FREDERICK C. MOSHER, W. DAVID CLINTON, and DANIEL G. LANG **£20.00**

Please write for a full listing of titles available in the Miller Center Series on the American Presidency to:

Louisiana State University Press
1 Gower Street LONDON WC1E 6HA

The West has helped sustain a regime with one of the worst human rights records in the world. Now its enthusiasm has cooled. But the old dictator soldiers on

DECLINE WITHOUT FALL Romania under Ceausescu

by Mark Almond

Have basic postulates changed? Or has the old ideology merely been repackaged – in a way calculated to appeal to Western audiences?

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY UNDER GORBACHEV New Political Thinking and its Impact

by Gerhard Wettig

Full list of titles available from
The Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies
13-14 Golden Square, London W1R 3AG Telephone: 01-439 8719

Price of each including postage:
£4.50 (UK/Europe) \$8.00 (USA) £5.00 (Other countries)

Mark Twain tells the story of two brothers, one of whom went to sea while the other became Vice-President. Neither was ever heard of again. Yet, whatever the limitations attached to the office, it would be a mistake to dismiss it as worthless. Of the last eight Vice-Presidents, all except two—Agnew, forced to resign in disgrace, and Rockefeller—have become President or candidates for the Presidency. The last sitting Vice-President to be elected President in his own right, however, was Martin Van Buren in 1836, although George Bush may be about to break that particular jinx.

His campaign autobiography, *Looking Forward*,⁸ co-authored with Victor Gold, is a typical specimen of the genre and tells us little about its author. But for those seeking to envisage the shape of a future Bush Presidency, there is some interesting discussion of the Iran-Contra affair. The root of the trouble, both Bush and Regan agree, lay in a usurpation of power by the National Security Council, which was always intended to have an advisory and not a policy-making role. The more one considers the history of this sad episode, the more one appreciates Harry Truman's wisdom in ensuring, when the National Security Council was established in 1947, that it be the President's council, essentially an information-gathering and policy-coordinating agency, with no independent power base.

The 1947 Act establishing the Council stated that its role was "to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign and military policies relating to the national security. . . ." The attempt to use the NSC more "flexibly" began with Kennedy and his National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy, and reached its apogee with Nixon and Kissinger. Yet it was not until the Reagan Presidency that the NSC "took the ultimate step of not only shaping but operating an independent covert action in the foreign-policy area" when it entirely lacked the professional expertise to do so. There can be little doubt that the lax administrative habits of the Reagan régime, so graphically described by Regan, were responsible for the failure of the President or any of his staff to secure a grip on the NSC and ensure that it remained within its proper role; and the attempt to use the NSC for intelligence operations backfired horribly.

TIP O'NEILL was one of the most successful and best-liked Speakers in the history of the House. Yet his autobiography, *Man of the House*,⁹ is sadly unrevealing even about the way the House works. He is, one suspects, far too nice a man to write a good autobiography, and is prone to offering generous assessments of the merits of political opponents. This makes his dismissal of Ronald Reagan even more pungent. "Ronald Reagan", he declares,

"lacked the knowledge he should have had in every

sphere, both domestic and international. Most of the time he was an actor reading lines, who didn't understand his own programs. I hate to say it about such an agreeable man, but it was sinful that Ronald Reagan ever became president. . . . I've known every president since Harry Truman, and there's no question in my mind that Ronald Reagan was the worst."

For all his generosity of view, O'Neill remains imprisoned within the conceptual framework of an old-time Democrat, and his book unintentionally exposes the dilemma facing his Party. "All politics", he claims, "is local"—the natural view of the coalition builder, the party pro. The premise that all politics is local also lies behind Jerry Hagstrom's pleasant jaunt through the 50 states, which has been given the rather pretentious title *Beyond Reagan: The New Landscape of American Politics*.¹⁰ Hagstrom's impressionistic "Beltway Baedeker" reveals a wealth of information about the local mosaic of American politics; but he never really faces up to the question of whether the geographical peculiarities of different areas are not losing their importance, as American politics, partly under the influence of the mass media, become more nationalised and even homogenised.

The truth is that the age of large geographical coalitions in American politics seems to be over with the break-up of the solid Democratic South, and its exposure to the healthy winds of two-party competition. There are no longer solid geographical bastions whose vote can always be taken for granted in Presidential elections. Each state of the Union has voted for both Democratic and Republican candidates for the Presidency during the post-War period. Moreover, it is difficult to discover the existence of solid blocs of voters of any kind—with the significant exception of the black community, amongst whom the Republicans have made little inroad—that characterised the New Deal period. Walter Mondale was, perhaps, the last New Deal politician, seeking to appeal to organisations rather than individuals—the AFL/CIO rather than individual trade unionists, women's organisations rather than individual women. His disastrous defeat in 1984—he only just succeeded in winning his home state of Minnesota by a fraction of 1% of the vote—is an eloquent commentary on a strategy which failed to reach beyond organisations and institutions to the voters themselves, a strategy which failed to grasp the new plebiscitary realities of American politics.

The new coalitions of voters are based upon neither geography nor organisation, but upon issues and ideology, at least in so far as Presidential elections are concerned. In Congress, localist factors remain dominant, and it is natural for Democrats to remain entrenched there. At Presidential level, however, there seems to have been a movement away from the ideas characteristic of the New Deal. The rise of the two-party South drove the white conservatives out of the Democratic Party, while the espousal of social liberalism by McGovern and the economic incompetence of Carter drove out the blue-collar workers and the white middle class, who have become Republican voters in Presidential elections, although not Republican partisans.

The Democrats, in William Schneider's words, have be-

⁸ *Looking Forward*. By GEORGE BUSH and VICTOR GOLD. Bodley Head, £15.00, Doubleday, \$18.95.

⁹ *Man of the House*. By TIP O'NEILL. Bodley Head, £15.00. St Martin's Press, \$14.95.

¹⁰ *Beyond Reagan: The New Landscape of American Politics*. By JERRY HAGSTROM. W. W. Norton, £12.95.



**Why not choose an unusual book for that
SPECIAL person in your life,
OR just treat yourself?**

International Plays, Poetry & Prose
direct from

FOREST BOOKS

20 Forest View,
Chingford, London, E4 7AY, U.K.

Telephone: 01-529 8470/0384 Telex: 8951182 GECOMS G

Please send or ring for details

come "a top-down coalition of élite professionals and the dependent poor",¹¹ a coalition of the élite and the down-trodden. Since the former constitute a small and unpopular minority in the United States, while few of the latter actually participate in politics, the dilemma for the Democrats is clear. It is hardly surprising that the Dukakis appeal is based less upon ideology, where the Democrats suffer an in-built disadvantage, than upon good management. George Bush, on the other hand, charges Dukakis with being a "card-carrying liberal", a claim which Dukakis labels McCarthyite. The notion that an accusation of liberalism in the 1980s is as slanderous as an accusation of Communism in the 1950s tells one a good deal about the way in which American political alignments have shifted over the last 30 years.

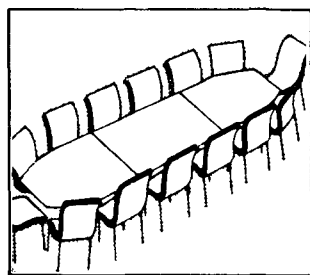
¹¹ William Schneider, "An Insider's View of the Election", *The Atlantic Monthly*, July 1988, p. 56.

It is still too early to judge whether the Reagan years have effected a permanent transformation of the American political landscape, or whether they will come to seem merely an interregnum, similar to the abortive realignment of the Nixon years. What is clear is that the new President, whoever he is, will have to cope with the organisational and technological innovations of the modern era, innovations which make the task of governing successfully even more difficult than it was in the past.

Ronald Reagan has followed a long line of unsuccessful Presidents. He will, indeed, be the first President since Eisenhower to leave office without being forced out through a loss of public support. The new President can be forgiven for thinking that he has come to inherit an impossible institution. Voices will not be lacking to argue that the American Constitution is inherently unworkable in the modern world; and yet the task of the President is to make it work.

"In War, Resolution . . ."

Iran, Iraq, & the Security Council—By ANTHONY PARSONS



IF THE IRAN-IRAQ war is really over—a question that may not be answerable for several months—there will follow a blizzard of books, doctoral theses and seminars examining it from every angle. There is already some useful literature available to the student of this grim conflict which

has lasted for twice the length of World War I and has devoured a comparable number of human lives. The use of poison gas by Iraq, both as a defensive and an offensive weapon, has underlined the analogy with 1914-18.

The recently published volume on the Middle East in the *Handbooks to the Modern World* series¹ contains brief but excellent essays on both countries. Students of the military aspects of the war will find detailed information in *The Gulf War* by Edgar O'Ballance,² while Sharram Chubin's and Charles Tripp's *Iran and Iraq at War*³ covers a wide canvas, including the political, economic, social and foreign policy aspects. Anyone who is interested in the views of a perceptive outsider on day-to-day life in revolutionary and wartime Iran

would do well to read John Simpson's *Behind Iranian Lines*.⁴

My own perspective is that of a professional diplomat, one who served in Iraq many years ago in the days of the monarchy, who revisited that country when the war had been in progress for nearly four years, who was Ambassador to Iran for the last five years of the Shah's rule and who then served as United Kingdom Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York from 1979-82, including the first two years of the conflict. Since my retirement five years ago I have tried to follow events in the region closely; this is not the first time that I have written about Iran, the Revolution of 1978-79, the war, and the part played by the United Nations.

Anyone who has lived in the Middle East knows that there is endemic antipathy between Arabs and Iranians. Culturally, temperamentally, linguistically and ethnically, they are as distinct as, say, Englishmen and Spaniards. Historically, each is the natural adversary of the other, rather like the French and the English until recently. Geographically, the battle front in the recent war is a dividing line between two distinct civilisations, Semitic and Aryan; it is analogous to the Rhine but easier to cross. For 400 years, from the 16th to the 20th centuries, the Sunni Muslim Ottoman Empire and the Shia' Muslim Persian Empire fought and disputed along this frontier. Western imperialism, first British and latterly American, helped to restrain the successor states—Iraq and Pahlavi Iran—for more than half a century; and, for a short time in the 1950s, even brought them into friendly relations. But Iraq threw off its British tutor in 1958 with the military coup which destroyed the monarchy, and Iran violently jettisoned the American pilot in the Revolution of 1978-79.

By the end of the 1970s the whirligig of time had come up with two profoundly contrasting régimes in Baghdad and

¹ *Handbooks to the Modern World: The Middle East*. Edited by MICHAEL ADAMS. Facts on File Publications (Collins Street, Oxford OX4 1XJ), £30.00 (460 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016), \$45.00.

² *The Gulf War*. By EDGAR O'BALLANCE. Brassey's Defence Publishers, £17.95, \$32.00.

³ *Iran and Iraq at War*. By SHARRAM CHUBIN and CHARLES TRIPP. I. B. Tauris, £19.50.

⁴ *Behind Iranian Lines*. By JOHN SIMPSON. Robson Books, £12.95.

Tehran. After a decade of confused in-fighting and a rash of military coups following the fall of the monarchy in 1958, the Ba'ath Party seized power in Iraq and built a ruthless police state structure, buttressed by the all-pervasive Party which acted as both mobiliser and monitor of the long-suffering people. The Ba'athist ideology is socialist, secular, and pan-Arab. By the time of the Iranian Revolution, President Saddam Hussein was well entrenched as the unchallenged leader. In foreign policy he cherished ambitions to dominate not only the oil-rich states of the Arabian peninsula, but perhaps the whole Arab world—which was without leadership, Egypt being in disgrace as a consequence of concluding a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Iraqi-Iranian relations were as usual uneasy. Not only did Saddam Hussein resent the challenge of the Shah's forward policy in the Gulf; he was also smarting under the humiliation of the Algiers Agreement of 1975.

This Agreement defused a burning crisis which, in 1974, brought the two countries close to war. The Shah had been supporting a rebellion in Iraqi Kurdistan. Iranian artillery had been engaged and Iraqi aircraft had attacked Iranian villages. Faced with the prospect of full-scale war, the two leaders reached a compromise under which the Shah would abandon his support for the Iraqi Kurds. In exchange, Saddam Hussein would desist from irredentist propaganda in the ethnically Arab areas of south-west Iran. More important, he agreed to a fresh demarcation of the land frontier and to division of the Shatt-el-Arab waterway along the *thalweg* (roughly the centre line); whereas the Iraqi frontier had previously run along the Iranian shoreline in accordance with an agreement (long considered a national humiliation in Iran) negotiated under British influence in 1937. In 1975 the Shah was the stronger of the two and Iran got the better of the deal.

ACROSS THE BORDER in the late 1970s a cataclysmic event was in gestation; it was to alter the political landscape of the region. The Iranian Revolution which—like my predecessors in Paris in 1789 and St Petersburg in 1917—I was privileged to observe at first hand, was a genuine mass uprising, cumulatively embracing the vast majority of the population. Almost uniquely in the modern Middle East, the people got the régime they wanted, one deeply committed to Shia' Islam, rejecting the Shah's drive to transform the Iranian people into a copy of Euro-Americans, and fiercely independent of any foreign domination, be it from the capitalist West or the communist East.

As regards Iraq, there was the additional factor that Ayatollah Khomeini had a heavy score to settle with Saddam Hussein for harrying him out of his place of exile in Southern Iraq in October 1978, when the Revolution was gathering momentum. In fact his next refuge, Paris, proved to be a far more effective vantage-point for directing events in Iran, but he was not disposed to thank Iraq for this unintentional favour.

A year later, by the summer of 1980, a chain of events had unfolded which enhanced the likelihood of an armed clash between the two historic adversaries. First, vigorous attempts were being made by Tehran to export the revolution, espe-

The emerging response to child labour Conditions of Work Digest

Vol. 7, no. 1, 1988

Millions of children are working illegally in both developed and industrialising countries under conditions harmful to their health, safety, and physical and mental development. This book provides vital information on what is being done and how, at community, national and international levels. It contains a world-wide survey of national legislation and international standards, and provides descriptions of programmes designed to protect child workers. A directory of institutions carrying out research, training and action programmes is included.

ISBN 92-2-106391-7

£17.60

Night work: Its effects on the health and welfare of the worker

by J. Carpentier and P. Cazamian

Is night work medically harmful? If it is, is it more harmful to women than to men? What are the effects of night work on family life? What is its impact on the life of the community, and does it call for further regulation? These are just some of the questions examined in this timely study of the physiological, psychological and medical effects of night work and of its economic, family, social and ergonomic aspects.

ISBN 92-2-101676-5

£7.70

Assessing women's economic contributions to development

by R. Dixon-Mueller and R. Anker

If female human resources are going to be used to their fullest it is essential to have accurate information on women's productive activities in the different economic sectors. This background paper in the series for training in population, human resources and development planning identifies major problems of definition and data collection, and highlights methods of assessing women's economic contribution to development. It thereby emphasises the need for incorporating an analysis of women's roles and of the prevailing constraints.

ISBN 92-2-106796-3

£6.60

Micro-electronics and employment revisited: A review

by R. Kaplinsky

Based on an extensive review of relevant literature, this study looks at both the direct and indirect effects of micro-electronics, and attempts to show how various aspects of the micro-electronic revolution are linked with patterns of employment. It focuses on the effect of new technology on employment and the quality of working life, and also examines the prospects and problems of Third World economies in developing their own electronics sectors.

ISBN 92-2-105610-4 (hard)

£17.60

ISBN 92-2-105611-2 (limp)

£13.20

Major hazard control: A practical manual

The prevention and control of major hazards — fires, explosions and toxic releases — has become a pressing issue. This manual explains how to identify major hazard installations, describes all the components of a major hazard control system and covers planning for emergencies at worksites and in the community.

ISBN 92-2-106432-8

£19.80

Access and Visa cards accepted

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

Branch Office

Vincent House, Vincent Square

London SW1P 2NB

Tel: 01-828 6401



cially to states with substantial Shia' Muslim communities. Iraq (over 50% of whose population are from the Shia' sect) was the first to feel this impact: the Baghdad régime, facing a genuine subversive threat, took vicious counter-measures against Iraqi dissidents, thus heightening tension.

Secondly, the unity of disparate political groups in the campaign to overthrow the Shah had collapsed and Iran was rent by factional struggle, thus offering a tempting target for those outside powers which hankered after the *status quo ante*.

Thirdly, Tehran's contempt for international rules of behaviour had alienated Iran from most of the world. In particular, the invasion of the American Embassy in November 1979, and the taking hostage of the staff had appalled the international community as a whole, not just the Western world. By this act Iran became something of a pariah—not a state to the defence of which anyone would be inclined to leap.

As the summer of 1980 progressed, tension rose higher. There were scuffles on the frontier; shots were exchanged; exiled Iranian generals and politicians were known to be in Baghdad; Iraq abrogated the Algiers Agreement. On 22 September 1980, Iraqi ground forces crossed the frontier and the Iraqi Air Force bombed Iranian targets. The war had started. Iraq had gambled on her ability either to bring down or substantially to weaken the Khomeini régime without having to pay an unacceptable military or political price.

THE ROLE OF THE United Nations Security Council has not, so far as I know, been studied as systematically as other aspects of the conflict. The first question to be answered is why the Security Council failed to take pre-emptive action during the month or so when war was manifestly threatening. The Council could, for example, have called a meeting, summoned the Foreign Ministers of both parties to New York to explain what lay behind the tension, and maintained the international searchlight trained on the dispute by, say, sending a peace-making mission to Baghdad and Tehran. This might well have been ineffective; but such action would have made it more difficult for the Iraqis to launch their invasion. In practice, the Council looked the other way. Why?

First, attention was focused on Iran entirely in the context of the American hostage crisis, thereby distracting the Council from other angles of vision. Nor was either party disposed to refer the dispute to the United Nations: Tehran was busy with its campaign of subversion; Baghdad wanted its hands free to "teach Khomeini a lesson". (Normally it is parties to disputes which call the Council into session; only rarely does the United Nations Secretary-General or an uninvolved Council member do so.) And the Council was as usual loaded with other problems—there is always a tendency in bureaucratic institutions to avoid the contingent in favour of the immediate.

When the Iraqi invasion took place, it might have been expected that the Council would meet in emergency session the same day, condemn the Iraqi action, and demand a cease-fire and the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Iranian territory.

Whatever the level of Iranian provocation—and it was undoubtedly high—there was no question in any of our minds in New York that Iraq was engaged in a major offensive deep into undisputed Iranian territory.

But the Council did not meet for four or five days. Iraq had sent a senior official to New York to persuade members that a meeting was not necessary, presumably because the Iraqis wanted no international restraint on their *blitzkrieg*. He was successful. The seven non-aligned members were converted to the Iraqi view: this meant that the necessary nine votes (out of fifteen) required to call a meeting were not available. Moreover the remainder, including the superpowers, were not disposed to over-persuade their non-aligned colleagues. The reason for this extraordinary behaviour was simple. No one was prepared to champion revolutionary Iran, the disturber of the regional *status quo* and breaker of international law and custom (the American hostages were still being held).

When the Council at last met and adopted its first Resolution (No. 479) on 28 September, the parties were called upon to cease hostilities and to accept the Secretary-General's mediatory good offices. But the Resolution did not call for Iraqi withdrawal from Iranian territory.

THE FAILURE of the Council to blame Iraq for starting the war, the delay in meeting at Iraq's insistence, and the adoption of a Resolution which, if complied with, would have left Iraqi troops positioned deep in Iran's oil province, had a profoundly negative effect on Tehran and conditioned the régime's attitude towards the United Nations from that day until the surprising Iranian acceptance of Security Council Resolution 598 in July this year. In a hard-hitting statement in the opening debate, Prime Minister Rajaie denounced the Security Council for its pro-Iraqi attitude and declared Iran's war aims: namely, the "identification and punishment of the aggressor", plus reparations. From then on Iran was prepared to cooperate with the Secretary-General and his representatives, but not with the Council itself.

Throughout 1981, the Secretary-General's Representative, the late Olof Palme of Sweden, paid several visits to both capitals in efforts to bring the parties together or at least to solve specific problems, such as the release of foreign merchant-shipping trapped in the Shatt-el-Arab by the hostilities. He was unsuccessful.

The Security Council did not resume consideration of the war until the summer of 1982, by which time some of the fiercest fighting had taken place and Iranian counter-offensives had driven the Iraqis out of virtually all Iranian territory. Iranian troops were now on Iraqi soil. Baghdad was on the defensive and only too ready for peace. In its Resolution No. 514 of 12 July 1982, reiterated (with a welcome for Iraq's willingness to cooperate) in its Resolution No. 522 of 4 October, the Council called for a cease-fire and withdrawal to international boundaries. This did nothing to allay Iranian hostility. No attempt had been made to pronounce on responsibility for the war, and withdrawal had been called for only when Iraqi territory was occupied—in contrast to the original Resolution, when the boot was on the other foot. The war ground on.

In the following four or five years the Council focused more on the symptoms of the war than on the disease—the attacks on civilian targets and on merchant shipping, the treatment of prisoners of war, the use of chemical weapons. One Resolution (No. 540 of 31 October 1983), principally about attacks on civilian targets and on shipping in the Gulf, broke new ground by including a preambular paragraph “affirming the desirability of an objective examination of the causes of the war”—a tentative gesture in the direction of one of Iran’s war aims. It was also the first Resolution not to be adopted unanimously: Malta, Nicaragua and Pakistan abstained because insufficient time had been allowed for pre-negotiation with Iran.

It was not until the beginning of 1986 that the Council made another attempt to end the war. In its Resolution No. 582 of 24 February (reinforced by No. 588 of 8 October) it called for a cease-fire, withdrawal (in practice almost entirely Iranian), and an exchange of prisoners-of-war. It also “deplored the initial acts which gave rise to the conflict” (without specifying whose acts), and called upon both parties to submit all aspects of the conflict to mediation.

Iran ignored these Resolutions as it had all previous initiatives. Meanwhile, in March 1986, the President of the Security Council issued a statement (a weaker instrument than a resolution) explicitly condemning the use by Iraq of chemical weapons. This was the first and only time that the Council departed from its policy of avoiding any criticism of Iraq. Even then the condemnation was qualified by the phrase “in the course of the present Iranian offensive into Iraqi territory”.

BY MID-1987 the war had intensified on all fronts. A major Iranian offensive was halted at the gates of Basra; Iraqi attacks on merchant shipping (and Iranian retaliation) had increased, and an armada of foreign warships, principally American, had deployed in the Gulf to protect shipping on the Arab side.

After months of consultation the Council adopted, on 20 July, the now famous Resolution No. 598 on which the current peace talks are based. This Resolution was, for the first time, mandatory. It “demanded” a cease-fire, withdrawal (still almost entirely Iranian) and UN monitoring. It called for an exchange of prisoners and, in its sixth paragraph, “requested the Secretary-General to explore, in consultation with Iran and Iraq, the question of entrusting an impartial body with inquiring into responsibility for the conflict. . . .” It also dealt with post-war reconstruction (reparations) and various measures to ensure a lasting peace. Iraq, very much on the military defensive, accepted it immediately—provided that Iran did likewise.

Iran equivocated, seeing little in the Resolution to indicate a move away from the Council’s pro-Iraqi tilt, and little prospect of Iranian war aims being met. The Secretary-General, who had faithfully pursued his apparently fruitless mediation mission throughout the conflict, spent the next year unsuccessfully trying to bring both parties together. The war continued and, notwithstanding the presence of the foreign

armada, attacks on merchant shipping on both sides multiplied, leading to sporadic clashes between US forces and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards and regular naval units.

Suddenly, to the astonishment of the whole world (and, I suspect, of most of the people of Iran), Ayatollah Khomeini confirmed Iranian acceptance of SCR 598 without “the aggressor” having been “identified”, let alone “punished”. It was, he stated, “like drinking poison”. After a few weeks of continuing Iraqi land and air attacks, presumably designed to improve their position at the negotiating table, the guns fell silent. On 25 August, peace talks opened in Geneva under the aegis of the Secretary-General.

AT THIS STAGE three questions are worth exploring. Why did the Security Council adopt what amounted to a pro-Iraqi attitude even after the American hostage crisis ended in January 1981? Why did Iran decide to accept SCR 598, which it had characterised as unbalanced? What are the prospects for a lasting peace?

No impartial observer could contest the view that, from the first day of hostilities on 22 September 1980 until the day (20 July 1988) when Iran accepted Resolution 598, the Security Council favoured Iraq. This was not, as many Iranians probably believe, the result of a superpower conspiracy against them. After all, the Council’s resolutions were adopted unanimously, and I can state from my experience in the United Nations that the non-aligned and other non-permanent members of the Council (with the exception of the single Eastern European), let alone the three non-superpower

THE ECONOMISTS’ BOOK-SHOP

Specialists in the Social Sciences
CLARE MARKET, PORTUGAL STREET
LONDON WC2A 2AB
Telephone: 01-405 5531

Open 9.30 — 6.00 Mondays to Fridays
10.00 — 1.30 Saturdays

We stock books on
ECONOMICS • POLITICS • HISTORY •
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS •
SOCIOLOGY • DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES • LAW • PHILOSOPHY

Plus a wide selection of
paperbacks, magazines and pamphlets.

We buy books too!
Our secondhand department is always
interested in buying books in the
above subject areas. Ring 01-405 8643
for an appointment.



**Ask for the ‘Social Science
Selection Guide’ — our
latest listing of new titles.**

Permanent Members, never follow the United States and/or the Soviet Union blindly.

Without being characterised as “pro-Iranian”, the Council could have launched an independent enquiry into responsibility for the war, called for Iraqi withdrawal in its first cease-fire Resolution, specifically condemned Iraq for escalatory acts such as attacks on civilian centres of population and the initiation of the “tanker war”, as well as threatening—indeed taking action against—Iraq for the use of chemical weapons. Its careful avoidance of any such steps, its disposition to associate both sides with all its strictures, gave satisfaction to Iraq from beginning to end, and effectively ruled out the possibility of securing Iranian cooperation.

I have explained how the Council was influenced at the outset by the American hostage crisis. It was also influenced by the implacable nature of Iran’s war aim of “punishing the aggressor”: namely, overthrowing the Iraqi régime and replacing it with an “Islamic Republic” responsive to Tehran. As soon as its first offensive ran out of steam, Iraq was ready for peace; clamorously so when Iranian counter-attacks threatened to break through on Iraqi territory. Thus, from an early date, Iraq was ready to cooperate with all Council peacemaking initiatives, and Baghdad came to be seen as the victim, Iran as the aggressor, unyielding and obstinate. Impotent to stop the war, the Security Council (principally the Great Powers) was concerned not to do anything which might help either side to gain an outright victory: the only side which seemed likely to do so was Iran. All interested powers deeply feared the catastrophic effect on the *status quo* in the whole region of an Iranian triumph and the collapse of Iraqi resistance. Hence there was a profound reluctance to show favour towards Tehran.

Had the attitude of the Iranian revolutionaries towards the outside world been different, the attitude of the Council might have been less censorious. But Tehran not only showed contempt for and rejection of accepted international behaviour by condoning hostage-taking and other acts of terror. It was also seen to be sponsoring subversion in the Arab states of the Gulf (Kuwait and Bahrain being cases in point), and in the Lebanon through its support for the extreme Hizbollah faction (Iranian Revolutionary Guards are still, so far as I know, stationed on Lebanese territory), as well as inciting such atrocities as the massacre during the Mecca pilgrimage in 1987. This is an incomplete catalogue—not only was the American Embassy violated, but attacks were launched on the Soviet, British, Kuwaiti and Saudi Embassies, while the French Embassy was besieged for months.

In a nutshell, the net effect of Iranian behaviour in the first nine years of the Revolution had been such as to convince the world at large that the régime must be contained, not encouraged, until—in the natural course of history—the revolution settled down into a pattern which the international community could accommodate.

Why did Iran accept Resolution 598? Throughout the war, bilateral attitudes towards the parties have, generally speaking, replicated the collective attitude of the Security Council. With the exception of one or two periods of restraint, Iraq was lavishly supplied with military equipment, mainly from the Soviet Union and France. Supplies to Iran were embar-

goed by almost all principal exporters of military equipment; Tehran was forced to depend on the international private arms market and on such improbable sources as Israel (for anti-Iraqi reasons), Libya, and North Korea. American, Soviet, British, French, Dutch, Belgian and Italian warships escorted shipping on the Arab side of the Gulf, while the Iraqi Air Force was free to attack shipping and oil installations on the Iranian side. This disparity in equipment and outside military support weighted the dice heavily in Iraq’s favour. Iran fought the war with numbers and revolutionary ardour; Iraq with air and tank superiority, and a preponderance in all other types of weapons.

My guess is that, after the failure of the last great human wave offensive against Basra in early 1987, and the subsequent advent of the foreign naval armada in the Gulf, it began to dawn on the Iranian leadership that they could not win the war and “punish the aggressor”. As 1987 turned to 1988, the effect of Iraqi air raids on cities and economic targets, the use of poison gas in the front line, and the appalling casualties and economic privations combined to produce a deep war-weariness which came close to a collapse of military and civilian morale.

It was at that point, in the summer of this year, that voices of moderation prevailed over the “last-ditchers” and the régime concluded that Iran needed peace and improved relations with the outside world. It was fortunate, if my analysis is correct, that the United Nations had in place a framework for peace (Resolution 598) and a mediating instrument (the Secretary-General) to which Iran could turn without loss of honour. In the absence of such a recourse, the “draught of poison” of seeking terms directly with the “atheistic aggressor” would have been undrinkable, and the war would have continued. It is this role which the United Nations, and only the United Nations, can play in such circumstances—i.e., when both parties to a conflict are simultaneously ready for peace but cannot, for domestic or other reasons, treat with each other without an intermediary which both can present to their constituencies as acceptable.

WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE? All that can be said at this moment (early October) is that UN observers are in place and the cease-fire is holding. However, no significant progress has been made at the Geneva peace talks. Mutual suspicion and hostility run deep; it is clear that neither side would have acquiesced in Resolution 598 had it not been for the fear of defeat. It will be a long, hard process, perhaps lasting for years, to translate the cease-fire into a peace treaty. Even the clause about withdrawal to internationally recognised boundaries has proved a minefield. Iraq is insisting on a reversion to the pre-1975 position, with her frontier running along the Iranian shoreline of the Shatt-el-Arab; Iran insists on revalidation of the Algiers Agreement. It is difficult to see how either side can give way without unacceptable loss of face.

Even knottier problems lie ahead. The prisoner-of-war ex-

IFPA Studies on Regional Issues . . .

Security Perspectives of the West German Left: The SPD and the Greens in Opposition

William E. Griffith, Werner Kaltefleiter, Edwina S. Campbell, Tamah Swenson, Jan E. Surotchak, Jacquelyn K. Davis and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr.

Although the heated debates of 1982-1983 are now well behind the NATO alliance, the main West German opposition to INF deployment policy at that time has continued to develop its thought on security issues. This opposition—found mostly within the SPD and the Greens—has elaborated its positions on the security requirements of the FRG and has had success in making them stated party policy. This study, written by seven prominent analysts of German affairs, assesses the relative strengths and prospects of the SPD and the Greens; analyzes the philosophical background of the challenges to the postwar defense consensus; and delineates the implications which developments on the left will have for the United States and alliance security policy. 1988. 130pp. \$9.95.

The U.S.-Korean Security Relationship: Prospects and Challenges for the 1990s

Harold C. Hinton, Donald Zagoria, Jung Ha Lee, Chung Min Lee, Gottfried-Karl Kindermann and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr.

As the American-Korean alliance reaches its 34th anniversary, the two nations face more opportunities and challenges than ever before. The structure for the alliance was formed during the Korean War, when the U.S. extended crucial assistance to the young republic, and it is the only country on the Asian mainland where the United States maintains a credible deterrent force. In the intervening years, however, many changes have taken place in South Korea and in the regional balance of power, including the U.S.-Chinese rapprochement and an increasingly active Soviet military presence in the region. This study examines the requirements for maintaining this trans-Pacific alliance, based on Korea's tremendous economic progress over the past two decades and the rapid political transformations that have occurred since the summer of 1987. 1988. 102pp. \$9.95.

American Military Policy in Small Wars: The Case of El Salvador

Lt. Colonels A. J. Bacevich, James D. Hallums, Richard H. White, and Thomas F. Young

A prominent feature of U.S. foreign policy in the Reagan era, American support for the besieged government of El Salvador also represents America's most significant sustained military enterprise since Vietnam. The authors contend that while American support helped forestall a Salvadoran collapse in the early 1980s, it has failed to reduce the insurgency to manageable proportions. As a result, the war has settled into a stalemate from which there appears to be no clear escape. They explain why American military policy in El Salvador has not succeeded to date and provide suggestions for improving its effectiveness in this and future "small wars." 1988. ix, 51pp. \$9.95.

. . . and Strategic-Political Affairs

Ending a Nuclear War: Are The Superpowers Prepared?

Edited by Stephen J. Cimbala & Joseph D. Douglass, Jr.

Contributors: Leon Sloss, Leon Gouré, Harriet and William Fast Scott, Colin S. Gray, Uri Ra'anana, William Van Cleave, Robert G. Leahy, Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., and the editors

For whatever reason, World War III breaks out and rapidly goes nuclear. Now what? How do you stop a nuclear war? Have the superpowers given any consideration to how a nuclear war should be ended? Will they even be able to communicate with each other? In this volume, eleven prominent strategic-military analysts examine a broad range of issues relevant to the termination of nuclear war, including diplomatic bargaining, residual nuclear capabilities, the role of C³I, escalation and de-escalation theories, targeting and operational planning, and the contrast between Soviet and Western politico-military theories and the termination of nuclear war. 1988. 185pp. \$28.00.

Why the Soviets Violate Arms Control Treaties

Joseph D. Douglass, Jr.

This study analyzes the emergence of arms control as part of Soviet political strategy, and the use of arms control negotiations as a strategic and intelligence tool to confirm intelligence on Western weapons systems, technology and plans. The author shows how cheating and deception are important Soviet tools, which are deliberately programmed into Moscow's decisionmaking process and strategic planning for the purpose of advancing national interests and misleading the enemy on the goals of the Soviet Union. 1988. 202pp. \$32.00.



Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis

675 Massachusetts Avenue, Tenth Floor
Cambridge, MA 02139-3396
USA

change bristles with difficulties. Is there an accurate count on either side? How many genuinely do not wish to return, or fear the consequences of so doing? How many have “disappeared”? Then there is the commission to decide on responsibility for the war, a vital plank in Iran’s policy of “identifying the aggressor”. The opportunities for foot-dragging and procrastination over membership, terms of reference, rules of procedure, etc., are legion. These are just some of the obstacles confronting the negotiators.

Meanwhile Iraq is taking a terrible revenge—including, it seems, the further use of poison gas against her rebellious Kurdish subjects—while Iran, if reports are to be believed, is busy imprisoning and executing supporters of the Mojahedin-e-Khalq who fought on the Iraqi side. Both Tehran and Baghdad can fend off international action in these areas by having recourse to Article 2(7) of the United Nations Charter (“Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorise the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially

within the domestic jurisdiction of any state . . .”), a provision which, since 1945, has enabled vicious tyrants such as Idi Amin, Pol Pot, and Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea to inflict unspeakable atrocities on their people without international retribution.

In this fragile and dangerous situation it is essential that the Security Council maintain its unity of purpose and positive support for the Secretary-General’s mediation efforts. Both Iraq and Iran should be left in no doubt that protracted recalcitrance or delaying tactics will have to be paid for, not simply in verbal condemnations, but in real terms of their respective relationships with those outside states, including both superpowers, to whose economic, political and military assistance they attach importance. There is too much at stake to allow the peace talks to drag on indefinitely with the ever-present risk of fresh outbreaks of fighting. The world cannot afford a second problem of Arab-Israeli dimensions in the Middle East.

Arguing about British Politics

From Eden to Thatcher—By MAX BELOFF



ANTHONY EDEN has been much studied of late, particularly in the light of the “30-Year Rule” having now released papers dealing with the Suez crisis. Richard Lamb’s title for his book—*The Failure of the Eden Government*¹—suggests a rerun over familiar ground. Yet he is curiously ambivalent about his subject. In some respects he makes extravagant claims for him:

“Over the Far East in the dying days of the Churchill Government, and as Prime

Minister, he almost certainly saved the world from the disaster of a third—nuclear—world war.”

And he regards it as unfair that Eden should have become the scapegoat for the Suez affair. On the other hand, he blames Eden for indecisiveness in important aspects of home affairs, and for having allowed his romantic attachment to the Commonwealth to make him “turn his back on the Common Market when the Messina powers would have welcomed Britain with open arms. . . .”

The difficulty is that to give one individual responsibility for actions in which others clearly took part is dangerous. The

claims about avoiding a Third World War would need to be substantiated by a much closer acquaintance with the policies and outlooks of the two superpowers than Mr Lamb is able to offer. Eden may have played a useful role in enabling them to avoid a direct confrontation over South-east Asia, but no more than that. In relation to the Common Market, Eden was fully representative of majority opinion in Whitehall and Westminster at the time of Messina. He was not more imbued with the Commonwealth mystique than most of his colleagues; and while it is no doubt true that Britain’s participation in the negotiations that led up to the Treaty of Rome would have been welcomed, it is by no means clear that their aims would have been reconcilable with British interests as seen at the time. And subsequent history suggests that these British reservations were by no means unreasonable.

On Suez, Lamb is on stronger ground—Eden’s unwillingness to let Nasser get away with it was shared by most of his colleagues and by British opinion at large. Even the Labour Party went along with that proposition until Hugh Gaitskell’s change of front. The mishandling of the actual diplomacy of the affair, and still more of its military planning, must of course be laid at the door of the Prime Minister. And if Lamb is right to attach so much importance to Eden’s state of health at the time, that is no excuse—Prime Ministers who are less than 100% fit should not remain at the helm in times of crisis.

But the real failure, as it increasingly emerges, was the unwillingness of British statesmen to accept the fact that President Eisenhower—whom they believed their friend—was determined not to countenance military action, partly out of dogmatic “anti-colonialism”, and partly because of the wish to preserve influence in the Arab world—which until the

¹ *The Failure of the Eden Government*. By RICHARD LAMB. Sidgwick & Jackson, £16.95.

evidence of Nasser's ambitions became manifest had also been one of Eden's primary motives. It is indeed paradoxical that the statesman pilloried for his "collusion" with Israel should have been the British Prime Minister most unsympathetic to the Jewish cause and most open to the entrenched pro-Arab views of the Foreign Office.

But to deal with the Anglo-American aspect of the affair demands a knowledge of the American scene which Richard Lamb lacks. A writer who talks of "Senator Hubert Humphrey, in charge of the U.S. Treasury" does not command confidence. Not only were George Humphrey and Hubert Humphrey politically poles apart, but Lamb really ought to know that under the US Constitution no member of the legislature could hold the executive office of Secretary of the Treasury. And Eric Johnston, Eisenhower's representative in the Middle East, is described as *Senator Johnston*. Perhaps Lamb thinks that "Senator" is a complimentary way of referring to distinguished Americans, just as French authors persist in writing "Sir" before the names of eminent Englishmen who are not knights or baronets. Lamb's book has much useful material in it, and is passably well written, but is an amateur production; and, while not decrying the achievement of non-academic historians, recent international history is not the safest pasture on which to let them loose.

² *Mrs Thatcher's Revolution: The Ending of the Socialist Era*. By PETER JENKINS. Jonathan Cape, £12.95. Mr Jenkins's publishers are to be congratulated for having brought out in November 1987 a book that takes into account events in the late summer of that year.

No one could call Peter Jenkins an amateur. He is, on the contrary, a highly professional political columnist who can be relied upon both to interest his readers in what he has to say and to illuminate the passing scene by reference to wider and more permanent issues. He is certainly no historian—in his latest book, *Mrs Thatcher's Revolution*,² he talks of a non-existent "1688 Act of Settlement" which seems to be a conflation of the 1689 Bill of Rights and the 1701 Act of Settlement. But he makes good use of historians, particularly those of the Correlli Barnett school, though perhaps a little uncritically. And although sharing in their regrets that Britain has so consistently undervalued technology, he does not seem himself to be much of a technologist. To use the image of the ratchet correctly, as Keith Joseph did when referring to the inability of Tory governments to reverse Labour moves towards more collectivisation, is one thing; to talk of the Liberal vote going up and down "ratchet-like" is to show ignorance as to what that useful device is actually for.

Given the seriousness of the questions he poses, such objections are perhaps trifling; though I admit to some bewilderment when so much emphasis is given to politicians in settling the use and misuse of government finance and so little to the role of the Civil Service in general and the Treasury in particular. Mr Jenkins is unusual among political commentators in recognising the validity of international comparisons—to some extent, the decline of socialism (which is his true subject) is a common feature in all the advanced economies in which it has played a major role. But it is necessary to be clear what in the British situation has contributed to the particular

THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Recently Published

IEA

Economics Through the Looking Glass

The Distorted Perspective of
The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics
by MARK BLAUG

The publication of *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, edited by Dr. John Eatwell, Professor Murray Milgate and Dr. Peter Newman, has been heralded as a significant recent event in British economics publishing.

How 'balanced' are the 2,000 entries in such a massive, 4 volume, 4 million word undertaking? Does the *New Palgrave* reflect the many different schools and divergent views in economics... particularly neo-classical core theory? Is the new *Dictionary* a comprehensive reference work or are important topics omitted?

These and many other critical questions are forthrightly discussed in *Economics Through the Looking Glass* by Professor Mark Blaug of the Universities of London and

Buckingham, one of the world's leading historians of economic thought and author of many books including the classic *Economic Theory in Retrospect*. (Cambridge University Press, 4th edition, 1985).

'Professor Blaug has accomplished a critical task which desperately needed to be performed for the health of the subject... I hope this *Paper* goes to every school, college and university which may have invested in this new *Dictionary*.'

Professor Terence Hutchison, Professor of Economics, University of Birmingham, 1956-78 and the internationally-renowned author of many works on the method and history of economics.

IEA Occasional Paper 78

52 pages

ISBN 0-255 36212-9

£3-50

Available from bookshops or at £4-50 (inc. p & p) from

THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

2 LORD NORTH STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON SW1P 3LB, ENGLAND

TELEPHONE: 01-799 3745

advantages and also disadvantages that the Thatcher Government has had to tackle. Too much Westminster; too little Whitehall.

It may be that this imbalance is the result of Peter Jenkins's unwillingness to cast his argument within the form of a narrative history, but rather to deal with it in a series of commentaries on particular aspects—as it were, a series of commentaries on a text the reader is presumed to have by heart. One result is that we are never given a picture of the recent past which brings out to the full how rapid have been the changes in outlook both on the Thatcherite side and among the Opposition. But this is not always the case. The eclipse of “monetarism” is handled with salutary irony. Not so the fight-back of the Keynesian rearguard. What ever happened to the 264 (or was it 364?) economists who publicly prophesied doom just as the economy was beginning to right itself? Their names should never be omitted from any work on recent history—if only to expose the futility of claims that economics is a “science”.

Again, although we get the full story of the birth and collapse of the “Alliance”, and reminders of its one-time standing in the polls, should not Peter Jenkins also have called attention to the number of reputable “political scientists”—the Butlers and Bogdanors—who spent much time exploring the constitutional implications of permanent multi-party politics and hung parliaments which were never seriously on the cards?

Nor, again, do we get much, if anything, on what should be the central feature of British politics (according to the clas-

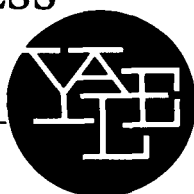
sical view), namely the House of Commons. What has happened to the St John Stevas Select Committees, and the expectation that they would give the House new meaning and a new purpose? Not even worthy of Mr Jenkins's attention? He is probably right. Less so perhaps to pass over rather rapidly the move in the Labour Party away from the Parliamentary style of opposition. The exceptional turnover of Members in the three elections of 1979, 1983, and 1987 has meant the eruption on to the scene of more and more Members, on the Labour side, who have no commitment to Parliament as such, and who attend (when they do) largely to disrupt. (It must be admitted that some Tory members of recent vintage are prone to the same self-indulgence.) Possibly the recent House of Commons decision to allow an experimental period of televising proceedings in the House will temper their antics, which would certainly dismay the nation.

PETER JENKINS COULD well answer that his themes are different. He wants to show first the nature of Britain's relative (and at times absolute) economic decline, to investigate its reasons, and to assess the manner in which the Thatcher Revolution has dealt with it or must do so. He is right to point to our failings in education and training as the core problem—though wrong, perhaps, in concentrating upon “policy” and too little upon the weaknesses of a profession trained for a generation to pursue the wrong objectives and upon the victims of educational theories inevitably

YALE

UNIVERSITY PRESS

13 Bedford Square
London WC1B 3JF



The Druze

Robert Brenton Betts

This first complete account of the Druze provides a general survey of the history, traditions and society of this secretive non-Muslim Arab sect and examines their political significance in today's Middle East.

192pp. *Illus.* £14.95

Marxism and Democracy in Chile

1932 to the Fall of Allende

Julio Faundez

Focusing in particular on the participation of Marxist parties in Chile's democratic government, Faundez's book adds an important new perspective to a perennial topic of debate amongst politicians and political scientists worldwide.

288pp. £18.50

Decolonization and African Independence

The Transfers of Power, 1960-1980

edited by Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis

What has independence in Africa actually meant, and what has it accomplished? In this book some of the most distinguished authorities on Africa assess the conditions in each country at the time of the transfer of political authority and analyse the consequences of the ways in which independence was achieved.

736pp. £30.00

Now in paper

The Transfer of Power in Africa

Decolonization, 1940-1960

edited by Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis

“One of the great books on the subject.” — *Africana Journal*

704pp. *Paper*, £12.95

The Materialist Conception of History

Karl Kautsky

Abridged, annotated and introduced by John H. Kautsky;

translated by Raymond Meyer with John H. Kautsky

Kautsky's magnum opus — a systematic explanation in Marxist terms of human history and of evolution in nature — has been translated into English and abridged to make it accessible and useful to modern readers.

624pp. £35.00

disastrous in their consequences. Who shall inspect the inspectors?

The other central issue is the failure of the Labour Party to come within sight of regaining power even when the high level of unemployment, dissatisfaction with "the caring services", and all other objective factors should have made victory not only probable but even certain. Nor, as he shows, does the process of decline look like being reversed. The dogmatists are wedded to views (unilateralism, for instance) which the electorate will not accept. The constitutional changes designed to protect the leadership against "the Hard Left" have made the Labour Party more than ever a mere creature of the trade unions—bodies whose strength, reputation, and influence have been in steady decline. Finally, the social changes of recent decades—stimulated by some Thatcherite legislation—have weakened and limited Labour's natural constituency.

The upshot is the confinement of Labour strength to the areas of maximum deprivation, largely but not exclusively in London and in the North. (Scotland, one of the most prosperous parts of the United Kingdom, is an exception.)

WHILE ALL THIS makes the path of Tory managers an easier one, it is not altogether a development to be welcomed. I remember, many years ago, the late Bertrand de Jouvenel telling me that in his opinion the French working class, by sticking to the Communist Party as its political vehicle, had rendered its direct interests certain to be overlooked in government policy, since the Communist Party was not a possible coalition partner.

It would be tragic if, in this country, the same were to happen to the least fortunate of British citizens. It is in their interest that Mrs Thatcher's final battle for "the Inner Cities" should be won. It is also perhaps not a very good thing that we should have moved into a one-party situation; it makes government careless. But Mr Jenkins does not prescribe; he describes, and very well too.

ITS ELECTORAL UNPOPULARITY is Peter Jenkins's chief concern with the Labour Party's Defence policy, whose intellectual incoherence can only fully be appreciated if we follow Lord Chalfont's analysis of the problems of British Defence policy in his latest book, *Defence of the Realm*.³ It usefully brings together arguments of which he has been a tireless exponent in the House of Lords and in the press for a number of years. His themes are so well set out, with such an economy of technical language, that no one who ventures into these difficult areas should now be able to claim ignorance. He places in proper context the nature of the threat to Britain and her allies; the inescapable connection between the military threat and the activity of terrorists; the way in which questions of arms control and of defence interlock with each other; and Britain's special responsibilities in respect of all of these. He is, and rightly, particularly concerned about the

³ *Defence of the Realm*. By ALUN CHALFONT. Collins, £12.95.

**The word is
out about
the new**

**WILLIAM
BOYD**



**THE NEW
CONFESSIONS**

'BRILLIANT
...a 'Citizen Kane'
of a novel'
- *Daily Telegraph*

 £3.99

Now in Penguin

likely changes in the Defence priorities of the United States and the failures of European governments to accept the implications for their own security, as though "out-of-area" should mean "out of mind". One need not agree with Lord Chalfont on all points. He may be over-optimistic about China and its conversion to the economic realities implied in its pledges in respect of Hong Kong; he does not examine how far Mikhail Gorbachov's apparent success in presenting "the Brezhnev doctrine with a human face" may be thwarted by internal tensions within the Soviet bloc, and indeed within the Soviet Union itself. But he does give one the feeling that this is the way such issues should be argued.

In the light of what Lord Chalfont says, it may be that Peter Jenkins is too kind to the Labour Party in his handling of its infiltration from the Left. It is not just a question of more or less "socialism". It is the adoption of policies which conduce to fulfilling Soviet aims, whether consciously (as in some cases) or as a result of being genuinely duped. These aims may relate not only to "Defence" policies which amount to dissolving the Atlantic Alliance, but also to what is said or advocated with respect to Central America or Southern Africa. Despite all the opprobrium aroused by the phrase, there is indeed "an enemy within", and Lord Chalfont's book may help one identify it.

The Kennedy Legend in Close-Up

A Continuing Saga—By BRIAN DOOLEY



EXACTLY WHY the Kennedys remain so successful is still a mystery. Apart from Edward Kennedy's failure to capture the Democratic nomination in 1980, and one Presidential primary back in 1968 contested by Bobby, they have never lost an election. None of the three brothers was ever voted out of political office, and this year both Edward and his nephew Joseph looked certain to be returned

to Congress without any bother whatsoever. In the old days, success was put down to "the Kennedy magic", the "ethnic appeal", and their good looks. More recently, it has been ascribed to an immense fortune, a gullible press, and the cynical exploitation of dead relatives. These approaches are both misleading. The time is ripe for revision of the legend.

In *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys*,¹ Doris Kearns Goodwin has attempted a mammoth investigation into the family's history, starting with the birth of President Kennedy's grandfather in 1863 and ending with the inauguration of John Fitzgerald Kennedy in 1960. Her book comes close to a level-headed analysis of the significance of the family in American history, and avoids the pitfalls of earlier works, which tended to paint the clan as either saints or devils.

Previous writers, in fact, seem to have taken "the Kennedy phenomenon" very personally and either loved it, as Arthur Schlesinger Jr did in *A Thousand Days in the White House* (1965), and *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (1978), or hated it, like Henry Fairlie in *The Kennedy Promise* (1973). The

new generation promises a more detached evaluation of the Kennedys, unless, of course, Joseph Kennedy manages to become President and stirs up all the old mixture of prejudice and adoration. But even Ms Goodwin avoids the most contentious period of the family's history, by finishing her account before the real excitement of the Presidency, the assassinations, and the scandals began.

When we think of the contribution of the Kennedys to American politics we mean primarily what happened between 1961 and 1968. Edward Kennedy has done serious work in the senate since then, of course, keeping the tradition alive and "picking up the fallen standard", as he would say; yet "the Kennedy era" really ended in the kitchen of a Californian hotel in 1968.

Few believe that Edward will ever make another bid for the Presidency. As a member of his staff during 1984 and 1985, I learned that his family are almost unanimously opposed to another attempt, on the principle that a live senator is better than a dead candidate. Many of those working for him, veterans of the '80 campaign against Jimmy Carter, believed that a third of the country would vote against him no matter what his policies were, and a third would vote for him in almost any circumstances. While the core of the Kennedy constituency remains firm, it has difficulty in attracting new members. That special constituency is what makes Kennedy no ordinary senator. He receives mail from all over the world, from people in cities he might never have heard of, asking for help. Some of his letters are simply addressed to "Kennedy, The White House", and begin: "Dear President John (or Robert, or Ted) Kennedy. . . ."

Much of his mail has to be redirected to other senators, as it is officially their "casework". Prisoners in South American jails write in the belief that he can do something on their behalf, and Arizonan pensioners, whose social security cheques are late, will contact Kennedy's office because he can be trusted, whereas their local representative presumably cannot.

¹ *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys: An American Saga*. By DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £16.95.

This is unusual. Most senators and congressmen tend to get such letters only from their own district or state. At certain times, of course, if a politician is showing a particularly high profile, letters will be written from all over the country. Sam Nunn of Georgia, for instance, known for his expertise on defence issues, is often asked for his opinion on military weapons by constituents in the northern cities.

Edward Kennedy's "special senator" aura is apparent in other ways too. When he strides into the Senate chamber, the public gallery wakes up and fingers point. He attracts the brightest staff without paying the brightest wages, and is simply the most recognised senator in Washington.

A FEW YEARS AGO, at the beginning of the 99th Congress, thousands of "pro-lifers" descended on the nation's capital to protest against the abortion law. There were hundreds of them all over the Congressional buildings, cheering those who championed their cause and booing those who didn't.

Dozens of the protestors were to be found outside the office of every senator who had ever voted for a measure to permit abortion. The protestors had a list. Kennedy was on the list for his pro-choice stand on abortion, so a group of elderly Irish Catholic women from Boston bundled up to his offices in the Russell building to give him a piece of their minds.

They got no further than the outer room before they were cooing at the pictures of the Kennedy family on the walls. "There's Jack, and Rose, and Teddy as a little boy—can I get copies of these?" one asked the receptionist. They left a little while later, placards dragging behind them, pockets stuffed with various Kennedy memorabilia for their friends back home. They "quite understood" that the senator was very busy and was unfortunately not available to meet them: more victims of the magic.

Despite what has been written elsewhere, Edward Kennedy is not an intellectual lightweight, propped up by a sympathetic staff who spend all their time covering for his mistakes and feeding him "Where was George?" lines to make him look clever. After 26 years in the Senate, he knows what he's doing, and has plenty of time left to do it in. By the year 2000, he will still be younger than Ronald Reagan was when he became President eight years ago.

SO FAR, HOWEVER, much of his time as senator has been defensive. In the Johnson years, he was very young and worked in the shadow of Bobby, the Senator from New York; and by the time he was made his party's whip, Nixon was in. Of course, he has not lacked concrete success; but if there were to be a Dukakis administration, he could have a major impact on legislation, initiating far-reaching reforms instead of symbolically leading a liberal line-up against the conservative revolution.

This, I suspect, is one reason why Edward appears the least successful of the brothers: his task as a Democratic senator has been largely one of morale-boosting in the face of adversity. His best moments have come when the chips were down,

Why did Appeasement fail to satisfy the dictators?

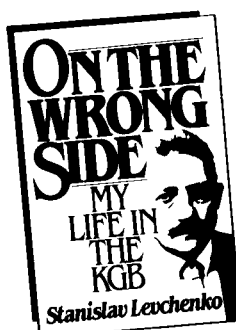
Fifty years on from the disastrous Munich Agreement former Belgian diplomat

Baron Rothschild focuses on key personalities of the 1930s as he draws upon personal recollections and anecdotes to examine the outbreak of World War II.

0 08 036264 8 (H)

366pp

£16.95



The true story of the KGB's 'most-wanted' defector.

"A spy thriller that is even more dramatic because the events really happened."

Senator John G Tower

"Does the KGB support glasnost? If not, Gorbachev's policy is doomed. Learn the reason in this chilling book."

Richard Helms, Former Director, CIA

"A fascinating spy story"

Tom Clancy

0 08 034478 X (H)

244pp

£10.95

The Gulf War

Edgar O'Ballance

Since the Iraqi invasion of Iran, the strategically important oil-producing region of the Persian Gulf has become one of the world's major crises centres. Edgar O'Ballance draws upon his breadth of experience as an expert in Middle East affairs to present a definitive study of all major aspects of the Gulf War.

0 08 034747 9 (H)

232pp

£17.95

The World in Conflict 1989

(War Annual 3)

John Laffin

Laffin provides a complete, richly illustrated account of the world's many wars, as they happen.

"... reliable and insightful analysis ... presents the world's battlegrounds in amazingly dispassionate terms. Laffin chooses no one side in the conflicts and finds fault in both."

Etan Vlessing, The Social Democrat

0 08 036265 6 (H)

250pp

Dec 1988

£16.95 approx



BRASSEY'S

Brassey's, Headington Hill Hall, Oxford OX3 0BW. Tel. (0865) 64881
Member of Maxwell Pergamon Publishing Corporation plc

as during his speech to the Democratic convention in 1980, after he had lost the nomination, and a few months before President Carter was to be defeated by Ronald Reagan. John and Robert, by comparison, had it easy. Both emerged at a time of liberal triumph, when the Democrats were still the natural party of government. Yet for all of their successes, it should be remembered that Edward has now had more experience of elective office than both of his brothers put together. He has also had to bear the brunt of the scandals “unearthed” about the older members of his family, as though they were somehow his responsibility. Would people really vote against Edward Kennedy because his brother might have slept with Marilyn Monroe?

Of course, he has had “scandals” of his own. The incident at Chappaquidick has done him no favours, and may well be the reason why he is not President; but it has not destroyed his political career. He was elected Massachusetts senator twice before the tragedy, and four times since. Moreover, this is the sort of issue which probably does not affect people by itself. Those who start out by believing that “the Kennedys” are untrustworthy, will not trust Edward’s account of the tragedy. Kennedy fans are more likely to believe him.

Ms Goodwin treats earlier scandals involving Joseph Kennedy senior more rationally than others have treated alleged indiscretions by his sons. She investigates his relationship with Gloria Swanson, not for sensationalism or cheap political point-scoring, but for the impact it had on the development of the family. Enough time has elapsed, it seems, for some skeletons to emerge from the closet without their being given the “sexy secrets of those naughty Kennedys” treatment—although some may yet cite an affair which might

have happened 60 years ago as good reason for voting against Edward Kennedy.

Essentially, Kennedy politics has always had more to do with emotions than reasons. Where once the family benefited from mindless adoration, its members are now victims of those who refuse to reason, those who ignore the record and dismiss Ted Kennedy as a buffoon riding on past glories. They are every bit as ridiculous as the sycophants of the ’60s.

The problem is largely of the family’s own making. The consistently high-profile, high-intensity style of politics both endears and repels. Members of the Kennedy staff, when sent as representatives to official functions, or just on errands around Washington or Boston, will usually be greeted in one of two distinctive ways, aggressively or amiably. There are no moderates when it comes to the Kennedys; everybody has an opinion. Other Congressmen and women don’t have the same effect: no heads turn if you say you’re there to represent Senator Lugar, Moynihan or even Goldwater.

Whatever the future of the Kennedy family in American politics, the effect its members have had on the system to date deserves a better standard of study than that which has so far been produced. Schlesinger’s histories are, of course, brilliantly written, and in their way, definitive; yet a colder eye from a more detached generation should break the tiresome cycle of the “goodies versus baddies” argument which has raged for so long.

Doris Kearns Goodwin comes close, but fails to grasp the nettle by not carrying her study into the 1960s and beyond. Perhaps the issues are still too hot to handle in this century, the emotions too strong, and the temptation to mock too great.

In Golden Acre Park, Leeds

The sunlight is fresh poured, liquescent gold,
Transparent, yet its body can be felt.
The roses and the rhododendrons float
In verdancy of leaves and fern, and yield
Their innocent convictions to the wide
And cloudless stare of blue. And, over there,
Past shimmering skin of pond, past beech and fir,
Keeping to the careful paths, the staid
And well-pressed man of later middle-age,
Clean-shaven, solid, shiny-booted, walks
And does not see or hear dark starry larks
And boisterous blackbirds musically enlarge
Upon this jewelled morning in July.
His step is blind, mechanical; his eyes
Are glacial, fixed ahead as if he sees
A frozen bleak horizon far away
From this rejected luxury of air
And colour. Tucked with care beneath one arm,
Packed neatly, like a family snapshot album
His prudent waterproof is held secure.
A tidy parcelling of navy-blue
Containing rain-seeds, memories of war,
Dark clouds, a little thunderbolt or two.

Vernon Scannell

Books Encountered

Full Circle: Bringing up Children in the Post-Permissive Society. Edited by DIGBY ANDERSON. The Social Affairs Unit, £8.95.

The subtitle says it all. Eleven essays by mainly university experts, arguing that "permissive" upbringing led to crime, self-inflicted disease, poor school achievement, and children without fathers. The authors call for discrimination, discipline, authority, and traditional virtues, family structure, and teaching.

Inside the Think Tank: Advising the Cabinet 1971-83. By TESSA BLACKSTONE and WILLIAM PLOWDEN. Heinemann, £14.95.

Set up by Edward Heath and abolished by Margaret Thatcher, the Central Policy Review Staff gave non-departmental advice—good on the motor industry, disputed on nuclear power, the Health Service, and overseas diplomatic staff. Here, two former members give a detailed insiders' account, wistful about its demise, but a bit dull.

MacDiarmid: Christopher Murray Grieve: A Critical Biography. By ALAN BOLD. John Murray, £17.95.

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie 'em/To see the Scots as others see 'em! Well, Grieve revitalised the Scots language, and wrote touching poems, and was cantankerous enough to be thrown out of the National Party for Communism and out of the CP (twice); and Alan Bold's study is exhaustive—and very Scottish.

Something to Hold Onto: Autobiographical Sketches. By RICHARD COBB. John Murray, £12.95.

These rambling, unindexed reminiscences have the same humble charm as their predecessors *Still Life* and *A Classical Education*: but the humility is deceptive, since it begs the question of why we should want to know so much. The Paris sections, all too brief, reveal hygienic sexual habits, apparently passionless.

The Fitzrovians: A Portrait of Bohemian Society 1900-55. By HUGH DAVID. Michael Joseph, £15.95.

Nostalgic rerun over territory already largely covered by Arthur Ransome's *Bohemia in London*, J. Maclaren-Ross's *Memoirs of the Forties*, and Robert Hewison's *Under Siege*: the bibulous Soho of The Black Horse, The Fitzroy Tavern, etc., with a brief update to the Groucho Club.

The Green Consumer Guide. By JOHN ELKINGTON and JULIA HAILES. Gollancz, £3.95.

Excellent value: not intended for cranks, but for sensible users of goods and services seeking to minimise environmental harm.

The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places. By NADINE GORDIMER. Jonathan Cape, £15.00.

Twenty-three pieces, mainly about Africa and especially South African politics, but refracted through the author's experience and writings. The book's editor, Stephen Clingman, provides helpful notes and an introduction. The travel-writing is vivid; the political analysis is ominously shrewd.

In Search of J. D. Salinger. By IAN HAMILTON. Heinemann, £12.95.

Like *The Quest for Corvo*, this is in part an account of how the biographer fared with his elusive quarry, who successfully sued to protect his copyright in unpublished letters. The result is equivocal: brilliant detection work and much frustration.

Worlds Apart. By DAVID HOLBROOK. Robert Hale, £10.95.

A sensitive exploration of the distances, geographical and other, between the main protagonist, a woman teacher, and the

young, but ageing scientist whom she seeks to wean from Sixties trendiness. A vivid, old-fashioned novel, surprisingly tart.

The Durrell-Miller Letters 1935-80. Edited by IAN S. MACNIVEN. Faber, £17.50.

More than 500 pages of largely mutual admiration by Lawrence Durrell and Henry Miller (a.k.a. The Dauphin and The Old Pretender); but this is only a selection from three times as much, sifted by the scholarly and hard-working editor, who has much enlarged on the 1963 instalment. It makes fascinating eavesdropping.

Beauty in History: Society, Politics and Personal Appearance c. 1500 to the Present. By ARTHUR MARWICK. Thames and Hudson, £18.95.

Lavishly illustrated, waywardly original study of how physical beauty affects social and political status. The author believes that "historians have generally been more successful in describing the looks of male personages than of female ones": if so, he has more than made up for their failure. Juicy stuff.

John Updike. By JULIE NEWMAN. Macmillan, £6.95.

A rather dogged study of Updike's novels, in the publisher's "Modern Novelists" series, by a lecturer in English at Newcastle who has also written rewardingly on Saul Bellow. Dr Newman's remit excludes consideration of Updike's fine criticism and meticulous trifles like "How to Drink from a Cup": but her judgment is sound.

Journey Continued: An Autobiography. By ALAN PATON. Oxford University Press, £14.95.

Second (and now, alas, posthumous) volume of what began with *Towards the Mountains* in 1980. It begins in 1948 with *Cry, the Beloved Country*, and ends in 1968 with the death of the South African Liberal Party, followed by a brief epilogue, repeating his disbelief in the effectiveness of sanctions but honouring those struggling to build a more just society.

Ghosts in the Mirror. By ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET. Translated by JO LEVY. John Calder, £12.95.

Allusive, elusive, but hypnotic Notes Towards the Formulation of an Autobiography by the elegantly fluent old New Novelist and cineast, full of bright observations—e.g. on the past definite which weighs down Sartre's *Les Chemins de la Liberté*, on Camus's *L'Étranger*, on Franco-British antagonism. The translation is fine.

Walking Along the Border. By COLM TÓIBÍN. Photographs by TONY O'SHEA. Macdonald/Queen Anne Press, £7.95.

Totally absorbing account of an Irish journalist's slightly to-and-fro walk along the Irish border in 1986, from Derry to Carlingford Lough. The Orwellian reporting is more illuminating than any history, Royal Commission, or Insight study: it shows how harebrained are such "solutions" as "sealing the border". No politician should neglect this book.

Happiness. By THEODORE ZELDIN. Collins Harvill, £11.95.

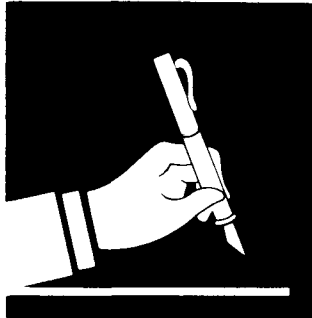
Weird and truly wonderful fantasy of the afterlife by a puckish Francophile and highly original historian, best known for his work on Napoleon III, his *France 1848-1945*, and his chatty *The French*. The tone recalls Samuel Butler with touches of Lewis Carroll: the explorer of Paradise is a young woman called Sundry (Somebody), a rather modern Alice.

R.M.

EAST & WEST

The Unknown Indian

On Nirad Chaudhuri's Achievement—By EDWARD SHILS



THE SECOND VOLUME of Nirad Chaudhuri's autobiography, *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!*¹ appeared within a few days of his 90th birthday. What Samuel Johnson said of lady preachers and dogs which walk on their hind legs does not apply to Mr Chaudhuri's intellectual achievement. Unlike those female

sermons and canine perambulations, his book demands and merits a more exigent assessment. It should be said straight away that *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!* is an achievement of the highest order. Together with *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951), it covers the first 55 years of Mr Chaudhuri's life in Kishorganj, Calcutta, and Delhi. It covers them in a way which transforms our understanding of Bengal and of British and independent India, and it enriches the reader's imagination through bringing him into the presence of a man of exceptional strength and definition of character and of an intelligence no less distinguished.

The two volumes are the portrait of an age and of a society which are now remote from us but they are brought very near to us by Chaudhuri's precise and discriminating memory. Despite Mr Chaudhuri's own statement about the first volume that "it is the autobiography of a kind of life—not of a man", both volumes together are not only the autobiography of a kind of life; they are also the autobiography of a man unique in his moral qualities of honesty and courage, very rare in his intellectual powers of imaginative insight and in his powers of precise recollection of the most various events. Mr Chaudhuri disposes over a body of knowledge which would do credit to a great scholar, and his memory is as capacious and alive as his absorptive capacity.

When I try to assess Mr Chaudhuri's two autobiographical volumes, my mind turns to the very different autobiographical works of Osbert Sitwell and those of Leonard Woolf, of Bertrand Russell, Victor Pritchett, Anthony Powell—and, in France, the *Mémoires* of Raymond Aron and Simone de Beauvoir, and of H. L. Mencken and Sidney Hook in the

United States. All of these are works of outstanding merit, the records of lives of individuals distinguished by achievements which have been embodied in their other intellectual works and in their activities. They are among the best autobiographies of the 20th century. I place Nirad Chaudhuri's two books in the very forefront of these.

Mr Chaudhuri was well aware that the ignorance and indifference which made him unknown were relative to who the knowers were and where they were. He lived, well known and warily respected, in a small pocket of the world unknown to the wider world in consequence of the uninterestedness of that world in any aspect of Indian life other than Gandhi and Nehru and the events connected with them, and, on an intellectually lower level, swamis and maharajahs. Mr Chaudhuri was known and taken seriously by leading intellectual figures in Calcutta while he was unknown elsewhere in the world. But in India, with its diversity of languages and linguistic cultures, Bengal was not regarded, outside its own boundaries, as any longer important.

At one time, at the very beginning of the century, when Chaudhuri was a boy, Bengal was still the leading province of India. It educated Northern India; it was the point of origin of the Swadeshi movement; it was the centre of origin of Indian social and religious reformation. It was looked up to in India, and it looked into the world. Chaudhuri and his fellow-Bengalis could see themselves at the centre of a peripheral society, which was peripheral only from the standpoint of the self-conceived and widely acknowledged centre of the larger world.

MR CHAUDHURI first became known to that larger world when he revealed with an unprecedented vividness and discriminating particularity what it was to live in one of the obscurest corners of the periphery and then how, from that position, he began to know the larger world—not just India, in the knowledge of which he was being well prepared by a sound education in school and at home, but even beyond the boundaries of India. Some British history, Shakespeare, and the high points of English poetry he learned at school and at home. He acquired a better knowledge of Britain and the foundations of European history and of the ancient Occident during his undergraduate years at Ripon College, Scottish Church College, and Presidency College, Calcutta. As a student for the masters' degree at the University of Calcutta,

¹ *Thy Hand, Great Anarch! India 1921-1952*. By NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI. Chatto & Windus, £25.00.

there emerged in his mind the desire to write a great work of history in a large perspective.

Calcutta in the 1920s and 1930s was a city of unusual intellectual vitality. It had ceased to be the centre of Indian political activity—its position had been largely lost with the ascendancy of Gandhian politics—but it continued as the locus of a very lively cosmopolitan intellectual life. It had numerous excellent bookshops where the latest European publications could be acquired. There was a substantial number of Bengali literary and professional men who knew and loved not only Bengali literature but English and French literature as well, in addition to the other European literatures and thought to which English and French opened the way.

Chaudhuri was an impassioned bibliophile. It was the age of *tirages numérotés* and of the books of the Nonesuch Press, and he bought many beautiful editions, often going far beyond his financial resources. He was also an assiduous reader at the Imperial Library. Anatole France, Pascal, Rochefoucauld and the other French *moralistes*, Rémy de Gourmont, François Mauriac, Charles Maurras, Julien Benda, Henri Bergson, John Middleton Murry, Roger Fry, Bernard Berenson, and, of course, all the great English and French authors up to the end of the 19th century were read by him with great enthusiasm and with a marvellous gift of remembering what he read. He also studied Aulard, Albert Sorel, Lavis, Seignobos, Eduard Meyer.

From his youth and for a long time afterward, he continued to wish to write an historical work on a grand scale. That was his ambition for many years, and he renounced it only very gradually. He began to write for journals in English and Bengali. For a time he also wanted to be a literary critic like Sainte-Beuve or Jules Lemaitre, and he was active as a literary polemicist. He was co-editor, with a number of his friends, of the publication *Sanibar Chithi* which conducted a campaign against literary pretentiousness. He renounced that ambition when he concluded that Bengali literature no longer had any living substance, and that Bengal had no future. These disappointments did not diminish his powerful desire to know and understand the world.

THIS SPARKLING intellectual vitality lived alongside boring employment as a clerk for five years in the military accounts department of the Government of India, a long period—at least three years—of humiliating penury and dependence on his reluctantly willing brother, for five years as an assistant editor of the *Modern Review*, then about four more years of unemployment no less troubling and humiliating, until, in 1937, he became literary assistant to Dr S. C. Law, a wealthy and learned amateur ornithologist and collector of birds; he was, at the same time, secretary to Sarat Chandra Bose, a leading barrister of Calcutta and an important nationalist politician. Concurrently, he became a commentator in Bengali on political, especially world-political, affairs, on the Calcutta station of All-India Radio.

Throughout this time as well as during the years of his second period of unemployed misery, he was active as a publicist writing for Bengali and English papers and journals. These experiences had brought him more and more into the

great world, albeit as an observer rather than as a participant. A great turn in his life came when, in 1942, he was invited to become the commentator in English on world politics for the All-India Radio in Delhi.

MR CHAUDHURI was unusual among Indians in that, among the many subjects that he had studied, he had from his boyhood been interested in military affairs. Beginning in the 1930s, he began to write from time to time on the Indian Army. He wrote without “inside” information but from the meticulous study of official documents and of military history. As a student of European history, he had naturally a knowledge of European wars and of the relations of the European states with each other. As an Indian, he was occupied with British imperial policy. The rise of Fascism and National Socialism which he followed closely—and, unlike his Indian fellow-countrymen, with utter disapproval—prepared him for the coming of the War, which he had foreseen with much anxiety. From this, as well as from his rejection of European and especially of British pacifism, he was entirely on Churchill’s side in the debates about British rearmament in the 1930s. Living in obscurity in a corner of the British Empire, he also lived alone, through his intellect, in the great world.

It was a hard life of long periods of injurious poverty, social and intellectual isolation because of his determination not to run with the mob and to write only what he was convinced to be true, and living in an uncongenial Delhi for nearly two decades, away from the declining Bengal which he had not ceased to love, but he never swerved from his vocation. His unbroken attachment to the Indian liberalism of his youth aggravated his isolation. His harrowing but not self-pitying account of this phase of his life calls to mind Gissing’s *New Grub Street*. However, unlike the ultimately defeated hero of Gissing’s sombre novel, Chaudhuri was fortified in his determination by his admirably loyal, patient and wise wife; thanks to her and his own brave character, he never crumbled. His difficult pursuit of his livelihood has never dulled his mind to the interestingness of the world, and he was enabled thereby to see things which others could not see.

NIRAD CHAUDHURI’S new work describes the evolution of his views about Indian politics. Although he was repelled by the mass enthusiasm and xenophobia of Indian nationalist politics after Gandhi had gained the upper hand, and although he was fundamentally attached to the Indian liberal and humanitarian movements of the late 19th century which aimed at the reform of Indian society and religion and which developed through the assimilation of Western ideas, Mr Chaudhuri was also a nationalist. He was, despite misgivings and reservations, drawn to the non-cooperation movement both in the early 1920s and in its resurgence a decade later. But by about the middle of the 1930s, he ceased to sympathise with the Gandhian movement. Nor did he have any more sympathy with the socialist

current within the Congress Party or with the radical nationalist current led by Subhas Chandra Bose (who was the brother of his employer, Sarat Chandra Bose).

Mr Chaudhuri always wanted independence for India. From the middle of the 1930s, however, he had come to the conclusion that Gandhi's ideas and the emotions to which Gandhi appealed were damaging to public life and promised difficulties for the future. His adherence to the cause of the Western democracies in World War II increased the distance between himself and the nationalist movement. Independent India did not please him any more than the movement which had sought its establishment. He thought poorly of Indian politicians, whom he observed closely during a brief period as acting editor of the *Calcutta Gazette*, the official organ of the Calcutta Corporation, and during his five years as the amanuensis of Sarat Chandra Bose. He found them corrupt, self-centred, and hypocritical. He was not at all an admirer of Gandhi's social and economic ideals, but he still finds it especially obnoxious that the ideas of Gandhi are so often invoked while his ideals are utterly disregarded in contemporary India.

OF COURSE, distaste for politicians is not by any means uncommon among intellectuals in all countries. In this respect, Mr Chaudhuri does not differ in substance from his Indian fellow-intellectuals. There are, however, two major differences. For one thing, his views are much more differentiated and better informed by long study and close observation than are the views of most other Indian intellectuals. For another, Chaudhuri goes much further than they do in the criticism of Indian politicians. He is profoundly convinced that political activities are definitely not the most important things in life. In this way, as in many others, Chaudhuri is a continuator of the liberal tradition—Indian as well as European—in that he places political action in the second rank of valued things. This contrasts markedly with the views of most intellectuals—both Indian and Western—who think that the new Jerusalem will be reached through political action.

Mr Chaudhuri has been a severe critic of Indian society and especially of the Westernised Indian middle class. He regards as particularly repugnant the superficiality of their adoption of Western attitudes and patterns of conduct. A deep and discriminating partisan of Western ideas, and of certain virtues of character such as honesty, hard work, courage, etc., he thinks that the present-day Westernisation of the Indian middle class (and not just that of the intellectuals) is an assimilation, not of the best ideas and ideals of the West but rather of the worst of its values, of unthinking hedonism, crude ambitions, and preoccupations with rank and office. To these defects, he adds the charges of spurious spirituality, excessive supineness before authority, and an excessive air of superiority in dealing with subordinates.

It is not uncommon for Indian intellectuals to criticise Indian society. But Chaudhuri's criticisms have touched the Indian intellectuals where it hurts; his criticisms are more comprehensive, and they allow few exemptions. Indian intellectuals are as captious about their own society as the intellectuals (radical, progressivist, liberal, conservative and

reactionary) of any country in the world; and as with the intellectuals of other countries, Indian intellectuals do not like to be included among the objects of such criticism.

The fact is that Nirad Chaudhuri is an outsider, in the sense that he has never run with the pack. His disapproval of socialism and communism placed him outside the preponderant block of Indian intellectuals in the 1930s; his criticism of Gandhi and the Indian National Congress in the years before independence separated him from that side of Indian opinion.

The most important factor in his isolation from the Indian intellectuals has been an appreciation of the benefits brought to India by British rule. He ranks as the finest period of modern Indian history the achievement of Indian liberal and conservative reformers who wished to improve social and religious life by infusing it with Western, mainly British, liberal and humanitarian ideas. Mr Chaudhuri dedicated the first volume of his autobiography

“... to the memory of the British Empire in India, which conferred subjecthood on us but withheld citizenship; to which yet every one of us threw out the challenge: ‘*civis Britannicus sum*’ because all that was good and living within us was made, shaped, and quickened by the same British rule.”

That gave much offence to Indian intellectuals, who are capable of becoming zealous patriots, even chauvinists, when their country is severely censured by one who does not share their political views. His situation was not eased by his prose style. The clear trenchancy of his mode of expression has never allowed any doubts about his views. Unlike Thorstein Veblen, he did not mask his thoughts or dull the sharpness of his wit by a cumbersomely sardonic style.

During World War II, Chaudhuri was one of the few Indian intellectuals—M. N. Roy was another—who supported the Western allies and who did not do so solely because they were at that time allied with the Soviet Union. Nevertheless Chaudhuri, who was shunned or spared as long as he was an “unknown Indian”, became reviled when he ceased to be unknown. The outburst of animosity occurred with the publication of *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* in 1951 (just before his retirement from the service of the Government of India as commentator and analyst on international affairs for All-India Radio). The success of the book in England aggravated the displeasure of the Indian intellectuals over its content.

ALTHOUGH URGED BY Mrs Chaudhuri as early as 1947 to emigrate to England, he did not do so for a variety of good domestic reasons. She had wanted him to leave her and their three young sons in India while he went to England; she knew that as long as he remained in India he would be handicapped by the small audience for his writings and by the hostility with which he was surrounded. In 1970, with their three sons grown up and one of them studying in England (he has since become a distinguished historian at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University

of London), Chaudhuri finally settled with her in England. Her advice proved beneficial. Chaudhuri has since then been very productive indeed, publishing a good book on Friedrich Max-Müller, another on Robert Clive, still another on Hinduism, and, most recently, the great book which I have been awaiting for more than a third of a century—*Thy Hand, Great Anarch!*.

Although antagonism to Mr Chaudhuri in India had become somewhat muted—*The Autobiography* was even reprinted there in paperback, and sold well—grievances were rearoused by the publication of *The Continent of Circe* in 1965. Nevertheless, this renewed denunciation was qualified by the acknowledgement that Mr Chaudhuri had outstanding qualities as a writer and by awareness that he was becoming established in England as a productive scholar and was being accorded a very considerable measure of respect.

None of this antagonism has deterred Chaudhuri or caused him to yield to his critics. He has remained what he was: a proudly independent person with an unswerving determination to understand the world and to tell the truth as he sees it. He has never been one who governed his intellectual and personal actions by calculation of their consequences for his reputation or his income.

Chaudhuri was always dominated by his appreciation of the great works of British and French literature, history, and philosophy. He also admired England and what he saw as the British virtues of steadfastness, courage, courtesy, the capacity for hard work and honesty. (He did not frequently encounter these virtues in the behaviour of Englishmen in India; and, in his analysis of the fate of the British Empire in India, he has never been reluctant to stress the offensive departures from these virtues.) Nevertheless, since he has settled in England, he has become convinced that the British people—and, above all, the British intellectuals—have lost their sense of national greatness, and that British society and culture have fallen into decadence. He had already had a forewarning of this in the loss of the British will-to-rule in India; he regarded the way in which Great Britain withdrew from India as igno-

minious. Since he became resident in England, the ramifications of this renunciation of the burdens of national greatness have become more evident to him.

Perhaps one should not ask whether Nirad Chaudhuri is happy here now that England is so different from what he knew it to be when he was a young man. He refers to himself as “an exile” but he also takes pride in being “a citizen of the world”. He is “an exile” in England only in the sense that it is not his native country. It is his spiritual country to which he is attached by traditions which he shares with many Englishmen and which he absorbed through a lifetime of study of English books and history. Chaudhuri is an exile from India only in the sense that he no longer lives in his native country and that he is aware that he is disapproved of there by his fellow-Indians.

Against this, it must be emphasised that he is still an Indian, attached to India in the most primordial way. Mr Chaudhuri has never ceased to be a genuine Indian patriot; he acknowledges how much of his thought he owes to his Indian culture. He loves and mourns for the now sunken Bengal. India has been the focus of nearly all his writings: it is there in his book on England, in his book on Max-Müller (who devoted his life to making India comprehensible to the West and to arousing India through the fruits of Western Indological scholarship), and in his book on Robert Clive who built the foundation of the British Empire in India.

To be “a citizen of the world” does not mean the complete dissolution of particular primordial ties and particular cultural traditions. It entails, however, bearing the costs of renunciation of certain deep-rooted connections and intellectual traditions. It does not require that they be renounced altogether. In this respect, Nirad Chaudhuri has accomplished what not very many other human beings have done. He has indeed become a citizen of the world. Citizenship in the great world which brings together diverse civilisations is a great achievement. To have told of this development in two wonderfully moving and elevating books of autobiography is, likewise, a great achievement which will endure.

The Riddle

It seemed like an anagram, and yet it was not,
perhaps an acrostic, although it couldn't be squared
with a vertical reading. Perhaps it was algebra,
an equation to be solved by whoever cared

to approach it, patiently sorting terms
in the right range of values. Or perhaps metaphor
side-saddle on the back of her high horse
with telescope straining for vehicle and tenor.

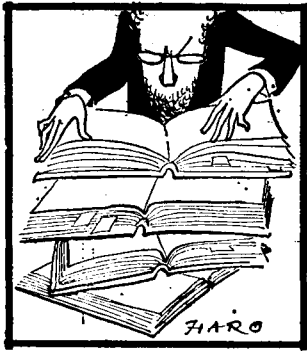
In fact it was none of these things, hidden
away to be found out by a labour of seeking.
It said what it did only as well as it could
—the first, and the last of its virtues, plain speaking.

John Gohorry

PORTRAIT

Edmund Wilson

Profile of “an Intellectual”—By PAUL JOHNSON



THE CASE OF Edmund Wilson (1895-1972) is illuminating because it enables us to draw a distinction between the traditional man of letters and the intellectual of the ideological kind. Wilson, in fact, could be described as a man who began his career as a man of letters, became an intellectual looking for millenarian solutions, and

then—a sadder and wiser man—reverted to his youthful preoccupation with literature, his true *métier*.

By the time he was born, the American man of letters was a solidly established institution. Indeed, in Henry James it had found an outstanding exemplar. For James, letters were life: he rejected with disdain the notion of the secular intellectual that the world and humanity could be transformed by ideas conjured up out of nothing. For him, history, tradition, precedence and established forms constituted the inherited wisdom of civilisation and the only reliable guides to human behaviour. James took a serious, if detached, interest in public affairs; and his gesture of taking out British citizenship in 1915, thus identifying himself with a cause he believed to be just, showed he thought it right for the artist to come forward on momentous issues. But literature always came first, and those who consecrated their lives to it—the priests who tended its altars—should never go whoring after the false gods of politics.

Wilson was at heart a man of similar inclinations, though much more ruggedly and incorrigibly an American. Unlike James, he saw Europe, especially England, as constitutionally corrupt, and America, with all its imperfections, as the embodiment of a noble ideal. That explains why, within his traditionalist carapace, an activist sometimes struggled to get out. All the same, by birth, background and—for a time at least—by inclination, he followed the Jacobean path. He came from an immense New England Presbyterian family and in childhood knew practically nobody outside it. His father

was a lawyer, one-time Attorney-General of the state of New Jersey. He had the instincts of a judge and Wilson inherited them. He said his father dealt with people “on their merits” but “to some extent *de haut en bas*”; and as Leon Edel, who edited Wilson’s papers has pointed out, the propensity to cross-question literary plaintiffs and to sit in Olympian judgment on them were Wilson’s most marked characteristics as a critic.¹ But he also got from his father a passionate love of truth and an obstinate determination to find it. This in the end was his salvation.

Wilson’s mother was a regular philistine. She loved gardening and following college football. To the end of her life she attended the Princeton games. Her desire was for Wilson to be a distinguished athlete and she took no interest in his writings. This may have been just as well (avoiding the destructive tensions which grew up between Ernest Hemingway and his clever, literary mother). Wilson went to the Ivy League prep school, Hill School, and then to Princeton from 1912-15, where he was well taught by Christian Gauss. He had a spell in an army camp and hated it, and ended the War as a sergeant in Intelligence.

Wilson was always a man capable of hard, persistent and systematic reading. His notes show that between August 1917 and the Armistice fifteen months later he read over 200 books: not only older writers like Zola, Renan, James and Edith Wharton, but a wide range of contemporaries from Kipling and Chesterton to Lytton Strachey, Compton Mackenzie, Rebecca West, and James Joyce. No man ever read more thoroughly and thoughtfully than Wilson; in his judge-like way, he read as though the author was on trial for his life. As a writer, however, he was much less systematic. He seemed incapable of long-term forward planning. His books evolved and elongated themselves, his non-fiction works starting as mere essays, his novels as short stories. Initially, he had the attention-span of a journalist; then, as he got emotionally involved in a subject, his judicial passion to get at the truth would force him to burrow ever deeper.

But it was some time before he found what he wanted to do. In the 1920s he worked on *Vanity Fair*, then the *New Republic*; tried drama criticism on *The Dial*, and went back to the *New Republic*; wrote verse, stories, a novel, *I Thought of*

THIS ARTICLE is an extract from Paul Johnson’s latest book, “*Intellectuals*” (Weidenfeld, 1988).

¹ See Leon Edel (ed.), *Edmund Wilson: The Twenties* (1975), Introduction.

Daisy, and worked hard on a study of modern writers, *Axel's Castle*. He had the privileged life of a bachelor Ivy-Leaguer, briefly (1923-25) tried marriage with an actress, Mary Blair, went footloose again, then married a second time, to Margaret Canby, in 1929. By this point he was already a junior man of letters, with a wide range of literary interests and an enviable reputation for shrewd and objective judgment.

THE PROSPERITY of the 1920s was so spectacular, and seemed so durable, as to inhibit political radicalism. Even Lincoln Steffens, whose *Shame of the Cities* (1904)—his collected “muckraking” articles—had been a milestone in the progressive era, suggested that US capitalism might be just as valid as Soviet collectivism—“The race is saved one way or the other and, I think, both ways.”² *The Nation* began a three-month series on the permanence of prosperity by Stuart Chase, the opening episode of which was published on Wednesday, 23 October 1929, the first big break in the market. But when the full magnitude of the crash and the subsequent depression became clear, intellectual opinion ricocheted off in the opposite direction.

Writers were particularly hard hit by the slump. By 1933 sales of books were only 50% of the 1929 figure; the old Boston firm of Little, Brown described 1932-33 as “the worst so far” since they began publishing books in 1837. John Steinbeck complained he could not sell anything at all: “When people are broke, the first things they give up are books.” Not all writers turned Left, but most of them did, joining in a broad, vague, loosely organised and often disputatious but unquestionably radical movement. Looking back on it, Lionel Trilling saw the emergence of this force in the early 1930s as a great turning-point in American history:

“It may be said to have created the American intellectual class as we now know it in its great size and influence. It fixed the character of this class as being, through all mutations of opinion, predominantly of the Left. And quite apart from opinion, the political tendency of the thirties defined the style of the class—from that radicalism came the moral urgency, the sense of crisis, and the concern with personal salvation that mark the existence of American intellectuals.”

Trilling noted that the essence of intellectuals had been defined in W. B. Yeats's observation that one could not “shirk” the “spiritual intellect's great work”, and that there was

*no work so great
As that which cleans man's dirty slate.*

The trouble, Trilling added, was that in the '30s there were far too many people anxious to reverse James's attitude and

“to scrub the slate clean of the scrawls made on it by family, class, ethnic or cultural group, [and] the society in general”.³

Swept into this seething mob of intellectuals anxious for a *tabula rasa* on which to write anew the foundation documents of civilisation was Edmund Wilson. In the winter of 1930-31, the shaken and demoralised *New Republic* was without a policy, and it was Wilson who now proposed it should adopt socialism. In “An Appeal to Progressives” he argued that, up to the Wall Street Crash, American liberals and progressives had been betting on capitalism to deliver the goods and create a reasonable life for all. But capitalism had broken down and he hoped that “Americans would be willing now for the first time to put their idealism and their genius for organisation behind a radical social experiment”. Russia would act as a challenger to the US since the Soviet state had “almost all the qualities that Americans glorify—the extreme of efficiency and economy combined with the ideal of a Herculean feat to be accomplished by common action in an atmosphere of enthusiastic boasting—like a Liberty Loan Drive—the idea of putting over something big in five years”.⁴

WILSON's comparing Stalin's first Five-Year Plan with Liberty Loans showed how innocent, at this stage, the newly fledged radical intellectual was. But he began reading with his customary Stakhanovite energy the entire political works of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. By the end of 1931 he was convinced that the changes must be enormous and that intellectuals had to find specific political and economic solutions and embody them in detailed programmes. In May 1932 he drafted, with John Dos Passos, Lewis Mumford and Sherwood Anderson, a manifesto, couched in the hieratic of political theology, proposing “a socio-economic revolution”. He followed this in the summer with a personal statement of his own beliefs beginning, “I expect to vote for the Communist candidates in the elections next fall.” He never seems to have contemplated actually joining the Communist Party but he thought its leaders “authentic American types” who, while insisting on “that obedience to a central authority without which serious revolutionary work is impossible”, had “not lost their grasp of American conditions”. The CP was right to insist that “the impoverished public has no choice but to take over the basic industries and run them for the common benefit.”

Wilson was well aware that he and his friends might be seen as well-to-do outsiders playing with working-class politics. Indeed the perception was just. Apart from reading Marxism, his contribution to the cause was to give a cocktail party for the CP leader William Z. Foster, at which Foster answered questions from newly-radicalised writers. Wilson quoted with relish a vignette of Walter Lippmann in his big Washington house during a rainstorm, in full evening dress, “holding out a small frying pan with which he was trying to contend with a veritable inundation caused by a leak in the ceiling”—the perfect image of the intellectual coping impotently with crisis. But he gives, quite unconsciously, an equally revealing vignette of himself, thanking his faithful black servant Hatty who had “marvellously enlarged and patched up” his old evening

² Ella Winter and Granville Hicks (eds.), *The Letters of Lincoln Steffens* (2 vols., 1938), vol. II, p. 829-30. Don Congdon (ed.), *The Thirties: A Time to Remember* (1962), pp. 24, 28-29.

³ Lionel Trilling, *The Last Decade: Essays and Reviews 1965-75* (1979), pp. 15-16, 24.

⁴ Edmund Wilson, “An Appeal to Progressives”, reprinted in *The Shores of Light* (1952), pp. 518-33.

dress trousers so that he could go to a party at the Soviet consulate to celebrate their "new constitution".

But Wilson, having a genuine passion for truth, and unlike virtually all intellectuals of ideological bent, did make a sincere and prolonged effort to brief himself on the social conditions about which he wished to pontificate. Once he had finished *Axel's Castle* in 1931, he plunged into on-the-spot reporting, writing articles from all over the US which were later collected in *The American Jitters* (1932). Wilson was a good listener, a sharp observer, and a scrupulously accurate recorder. He examined the steel industry in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, then went on to Detroit to look at the car industry. He reported on a textile strike in New England and mining in West Virginia and Kentucky. He went to Washington, through Kansas and the Mid-West up to Colorado, then down to New Mexico and into California. His descriptions are notable for their lack of tendentiousness, their gift for arresting detail, the concern for the normal, the non-political and the bizarre, as well as the class war, above all for their interest in people as well as ideas—in short, the exact opposite of Engels's *Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844).

HENRY FORD was "a queer combination of imaginative grandeur with cheapness, of meanness with magnificent will, of a North-Western plainness and bleakness with a serviceable kind of distinction". Wilson noted: "Wide use of spats in Detroit". He recorded anecdotes about quarrels, crimes and murders which had nothing to do with the crisis, described winter in Michigan, the fantastic architecture of California and the dude ranches of New Mexico. John Barrymore's wife was "a soft little doughnut". A Midwestern girl told him she was "making the best of the last twenty-four hours of capitalism". The old derricks near Laguna Beach were "like druids of old with beards that hang on their bosoms". At San Diego a distant lighthouse going on and off reminded him "of a rhythmically expanding penis in a vagina".

In the terrible winter of 1932, when there were more than thirteen million unemployed, Wilson joined a great cluster of intellectuals who had come to observe the Kentucky coal strike and wrote a harrowing description of what he saw. The writers brought emergency supplies and were told by the County Attorney: "You can distribute food as much as you want to, but as soon as you buck the law it will be my pleasure as well as my duty to prosecute you." Wilson described the novelist Waldo Frank threatening a mayor with publicity. Frank: "The pen, as Shakespeare said, is mightier than the sword." Mayor: "I'm not scared of a Bolshevik pen any day." The visiting intellectuals were searched for guns, some kicked out, others beaten. At CP headquarters he noted: "Deformed people . . . hunchback running the elevator, dwarf woman with glasses, woman with part of face discoloured as if by a burn but with a protruding growth of some kind from

the discoloured part." He showed a healthy scepticism about the value of such visits, writing to Dos Passos: "The whole thing was very interesting for us—though I don't know that it did much for the miners."⁵

The most remarkable aspect of Wilson's '30s radicalism was the way in which his independence of mind and his real concern for truth prevented him from becoming (like, say, Hemingway) a pliable instrument of the CP. As he told Dos Passos, writers ought to form their own independent group precisely "so that the comrades can't play them for suckers". He had already perceived that the radical middle-class intellectual tended to lack one essential human characteristic, the ability to identify with his own social group. In a note on "The Communist Character" (1933) he put his finger on the weakness of the intellectual:

" . . . he can only identify his interests with those of an outlawed minority . . . his human solidarity lies only in his imagination of general human improvement—a motive force, however, the strength of which cannot be overestimated—what he loses in immediate human relationships is compensated by his ability to see beyond them and the persons with whom one has them: one's family and one's neighbours."⁶

To a man strongly interested in human life and character, as Wilson was, such compensation was not nearly enough. Yet he determined to explore Communism not only in its theoretical origins—he was already working on what was to become a major account of Marxist history, *To the Finland Station*—but its practical applications in the Soviet Union.

IN CERTAIN WAYS he made a bigger effort to get at the truth than any other intellectual of the 1930s. He learned to read and speak Russian. He mastered much of its literature in the original. In spring 1935 his application for a Guggenheim scholarship to study in Russia was answered with a \$2,000 grant. He went to Leningrad on a Russian ship and was soon talking to people. From Leningrad he travelled to Moscow, then down the Volga by boat and on to Odessa. The great purges were just beginning but visitors could still move about in some freedom. In Odessa, however, he had a dose of scarlatina, followed by an acute kidney attack. He spent many weeks in a battered, filthy, but curiously easy-going quarantine hospital, a mixture of kindness and bed-bugs, socialism and squalor. Many of the characters could have come straight from the pages of Pushkin; indeed the place had been built when Pushkin was still alive. It gave him an entry into Russian society he could not otherwise have found. As a result he left Russia with a growing dislike for Stalin and an uneasy scepticism about the whole system, but with a huge respect for the Russian people and an overwhelming admiration for their literature.

Clearly it was Wilson's irrepressible interest in people, his unwillingness to allow them to be effaced by ideas, which prevented him from sustaining the posture of the intellectual for long. By the end of the 1930s all the instincts and itches of the man of letters were returning. But the process of emancipat-

⁵ Leon Edel (ed.), *Edmund Wilson: The Thirties* (1980), pp. 206, 208-13, 81, 678-79, 57, 64, 118, 120, 121-22, 135, 160-86, and letter to John Dos Passos, 29 February 1932.

⁶ *Edmund Wilson: The Thirties*, pp. 378ff.

ing himself from the lure of Marxism and the Left was not easy.

To the Finland Station grew and grew. It was not finally published till 1940, and not until the second edition did Wilson denounce Stalinism as "one of the most hideous tyrannies the world has ever known". The book itself is a mixture, containing passages dating from the period when he found the impact of Marx intellectually overwhelming. Thus he links together Marx's three propaganda diatribes, *The Class Struggles in France* (1848-50), *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) and *The Civil War in France* (1871) as "one of the great cardinal productions of the modern art-science of history", when they are in fact an unscrupulous blend of falsehood, wishful thinking and invective, and historically quite worthless. He defends or dismisses Marx's anti-Semitism—"If Marx is contemptuous of his race, it is primarily perhaps with the anger of Moses at finding the children of Israel dancing before the golden calf." He describes Marx's attitude to money as springing from "almost maniacal idealism", without mentioning his cheating tradespeople, longing for his relatives (including his mother) to die, borrowing without the slightest intention of repaying, or speculating on the stock exchange (it is possible Wilson was unaware of this last activity). Wilson is not in the least distressed by the sufferings which Marx, in the cause of his "art-science", inflicted on his family; he can imagine doing it himself, at any rate in theory.

But in practice? Wilson clearly lacked the disregard for truth and the preference for ideas over people which marks the true secular intellectual. But did he none the less possess the monumental egotism which is equally characteristic of so many of this group?

When we look at this aspect of his character, and examine his personal behaviour, the evidence is inconclusive. Wilson had four wives. He parted from the first by mutual agreement since their respective careers proved incompatible; they remained on friendly terms. His second, attending a Santa Barbara party in September 1932 in high heels, tripped and fell down some steps, and died of a fractured skull. He remained single during his most intense Marxist-Russian period, but in 1937 he met, and the following year married, Mary McCarthy, a brilliant young writer seventeen years his junior. The third wife added a new dimension to Wilson's political existence.

Mary McCarthy was an extraordinary mixture of origins and inclinations. She came from Seattle. On her mother's side she had both Jewish and New England Protestant blood. Her

father's parents had been second-generation Irish farm settlers who had become rich in the grain-elevator trade. She was born on 21 June 1912, and three younger brothers followed, but all were then orphaned. Mary was brought up first by an oppressive Catholic uncle and aunt, then by her Protestant grandparents. Her education was conducted at one extreme in a Catholic convent and at the other at Vassar, the distinguished, classic, women's college.⁷ As might have been predicted, she emerged priggish and inkstained, a mixture of spoilt nun and blue-stocking. Her real ambitions were theatrical and she took to writing as a *pis aller*. But she was very good at it, quickly establishing a reputation as an extraordinarily sharp reviewer, first of books, then of the theatre. She married but soon outdistanced an unsuccessful actor-writer called Harold Johnsrud, and when their marriage broke up three years later dissected it neatly in a superb story, "Cruel and Barbarous Treatment".⁸ Her next adventure, in 1937, was to share an apartment with Philip Rahv, the Russian-born editor of *Partisan Review*, and this brought her into the heart of the New York radical scene.

THE TRUE IF PARADOXICAL POINT has been made that, in the 1930s, New York "became the most interesting part of the Soviet Union . . . the one part of that country in which the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky could be openly expressed".⁹ The battle was fought to a great extent in and around *Partisan Review*. It had been founded in 1934 and initially dominated by the Communist Party, but its editor, Philip Rahv, was in his own way an unbiddable spirit. His formal education had ended at sixteen and thereafter he was on his own, sleeping on New York park benches and reading in the Public Library. Early in the 1930s, at the same time as Wilson, he became a Marxist convert, signalling his conversion in "An Open Letter to Young Writers", which insisted: "We must sever all ties with this lunatic civilisation known as capitalism." In *Partisan Review* he struck with unerring accuracy the prevailing note of the epoch—the middle-class intellectual grubbing down to the worker-peasant level: "I have thrown off", he wrote, "the priestly robes of hypocritical spirituality affected by bourgeois writers, in order to become an intellectual assistant of the proletariat. He was the great organiser of what he called "The Literary Class War", the title of one of his articles.¹⁰ But he broke with the Communists in 1936 over the Moscow trials, which he was certain were a frame-up. Rahv was a skilful herdsman of literary cattle and extraordinarily sensitive to their collective moods. He suspended *Partisan Review* for a time to see which way literary opinion was moving, then resumed it as a quasi-Trotskyist organ, and found he had guessed right: most of the writers who mattered in that milieu were with him.¹¹ They included Mary McCarthy, who became his mistress to boot, a worthwhile bonus since she was a pretty and vivacious young woman.

What attracted her to the Stalin-Trotsky war was not politics as such but the histrionic excitement it generated. "There is now", wrote James T. Farrell, the Chicago novelist, "a line of blood drawn between the supporters of Stalin and those of

⁷ Mary McCarthy's background and childhood are described in Doris Grumbach, *The Company She Kept* (1967). "The Vassar Girl", reprinted in Mary McCarthy, *On the Contrary* (1962), pp. 193-214, is a brilliant evocation of the Vassar spirit.

⁸ Reprinted in Mary McCarthy, *Cast a Cold Eye* (1952).

⁹ Lionel Abel, "New York City: A Remembrance", *Dissent*, viii (1961).

¹⁰ "An Open Letter to Young Writers", printed in *Rebel Post* and quoted in Terry A. Cooney, *The Rise of the New York Intellectuals: Partisan Review and Its Circle* (Wisconsin, 1986), p. 41; *Partisan Review*, xii (1934); *New Masses*, August 1932.

¹¹ For Rahv's various political positions, see A. J. Porter and A. J. Dovosin (eds.), *Philip Rahv: Essays on Literature and Politics, 1932-78* (1978).

Trotsky, and that line of blood appears like an impassable river." Earl Browder, the CP boss, said that Trotskyists caught distributing leaflets at CP meetings should be "exterminated". Mary McCarthy later pictured the *Partisan Review* offices as an isolated garrison in Union Square:

"The whole region was Communist territory; 'they' were everywhere—in the streets, in the cafeterias; nearly every derelict building contained at least one of their front-groups or schools or publications."

When *Partisan Review* moved to Astor Place it shared a building with the CP's *New Masses*: "... meeting 'them' in the elevator, riding down in silence, enduring their cold scrutiny, was a prospect often joked about but dreaded."¹²

She seems to have found this religious warfare, with its pungent atmosphere of *odium theologicum*, exciting. Indeed it is interesting the way her Catholic moral training survived as ideological priggishness, such as a refusal to talk to, lunch or associate with anyone who broke one of her moral-intellectual-political rules, often narrowly defined in doctrinal terms. Her actual knowledge or concern for politics as such was slight. She later admitted she drifted into her political postures, often from the desire to show off or have fun. She was too critical to be a comrade in the '30s sense. She once compared Trotsky to Gandhi, suggesting she knew little about either. Even at the time she would cause uproar at Left-wing parties by revealing royalist underpinnings when tipsy and bringing up the brutal murder of the Czar's family.¹³

In retrospect she strikes one as not a political animal at all: first totally ignorant of Communism, then a Communist, then almost by accident a Trotskyist, then an anti-Communist; then nothing at all but mild, all-purpose Left. But all the time she was ultra-critical, partly by nature, partly by training in Eng. Lit. Crit.; and, at bottom, not really interested in ideas but in people, and as such more of an intellectual's girl than an intellectual herself, by the definition I have been using here.

But did she prefer to be the girl of an intellectual or of a man of letters? Philip Rahv was unquestionably an intellectual but he was not an attractive man. While expert at guiding what has been well called "The Head of Independent Minds", he was extraordinarily close at concealing his own inner feelings. He was, wrote William Styron, "so secretive as to be almost unknowable". Mary McCarthy herself noted: "If no two people are alike, he was less like anyone else than anybody."¹⁴ Moreover, this appetite expressed itself most commonly by exerting power over other people, as his new mistress quickly discovered.

So Mary McCarthy, a romantic soul who loved New York's partisan warfare but was not easily dominated for long, slip-

ped from under Rahv's influence and found herself married to Wilson. In theory, this might have become a literary alliance, an intellectual union of the distinction and duration of Sartre's association with Simone de Beauvoir. In practice, however, it would have required two very different people to succeed. To be sure, Wilson's attitude to women had something in common with Sartre's: that is, it was self-centred and exploitative. His illuminating record of a conversation with Cyril Connolly, made in 1956, on the subject of wives reveals that, in his view, the primary function of the wife was to serve the husband. He told Connolly to get rid of his present wife, Barbara Skelton: "he ought to get a different kind of woman, who would take better care of him." Connolly replied that he was indeed trying to take that advice and extricate himself: "I'm still on the flypaper—I've got most of my leg loose but I haven't yet quite got off." Both these men talked about wives as though they were some kind of upper servant.¹⁵

BUT WILSON, unlike Sartre, regarded women with suspicion and a certain amount of fear. Women, he noted as a young man, were "the most dangerous representatives of those forces of conservatism" against which the literary hero's "whole life was a protest". He protected himself, as he thought, by pursuing a variation of the usual policy of "openness" of which intellectuals are so fond: he jotted down, in his notebooks, long passages describing his women in their most intimate postures, and in particular their sexual relations with him. Wilson was a writer of fiction as well as a critic and when he formed his note-taking habits was much under the influence of the James Joyce of *Ulysses*. He seems to have thought that, by actually writing down what happened, he could exorcise some of the terrors of sex and the power of women over him.

He wrote a great deal about Edna St Vincent Millay, the beautiful poet, his first and perhaps strongest love, who mesmerised him. He described how he and the young man who shared his apartment, John Peale Bishop—also in love with her—came to an arrangement whereby, obliged to share her, Bishop fondled the upper half of her body and Wilson the lower; she called them "the choir-boys of hell". He described (1920) buying his first condom: "I went to a drugstore on Greenwich Avenue and watched nervously from outside to be sure there were no ladies there." The shop assistant "produced a condom of rubber, which he highly recommended, blowing it up like a balloon to show me how reliable it was". But the thing burst "and this turned out to be something of an omen". He described getting venereal disease. He wrote that he was "a victim of many of the hazards of sex . . . abortions, gonorrhoea, entanglements, a broken heart". He took a gruesome interest in the garments women had to discard to allow him entry: getting off "one of those confounded girdles" was "like eating shellfish".

Many of the most relentless passages concerned his second wife, Margaret, "standing up with her clothes off in the sitting room at 12th Street, her round, soft, broad bosom (white skin)". She had a "short little figure when I'd embrace her without her shoes, standing up nude, fat hips and big soft

¹² Quoted in Cooney, *New York Intellectuals*, pp. 99-100, 117.

¹³ See "The Death of Gandhi" and "My Confession" in Mary McCarthy, *On the Contrary*, pp. 20-23, 75-105.

¹⁴ Harold Rosenberg, "The Herd of Independent Minds", *Commentary*, September 1948.

¹⁵ Norman Podhoretz, *Breaking Ranks: A Political Memoir* (1979), p. 270; Leon Edel (ed.) *Edmund Wilson: The Fifties; from Notebooks and Diaries of the Period* (1986), pp. 372ff (especially entry of 7 August 1956).

breasts and big torso and tiny feet". He noted also "little strong paws of hands (with hard grip) . . . when lying on bed, little arms and legs, turtle paws, sticking out at each corner". He described making love to her in her Beaux Arts Ball costume on an armchair—"it had been a little hard managing it—had she put one leg over an arm?", and "the time she took off her dress and her underthings came with it . . . I'm one of those ready girls, she said."

Then there were the adulterous encounters. One woman "rather shocked me by telling me she wanted me to beat her; one of her friends liked to switch his wife. I bought a hairbrush with wire bristles . . . and first scraped, then spanked her with it. I found this rather difficult, perhaps because of inhibitions. She said afterwards she had thoroughly enjoyed it." Another "thought that men's cocks were still all the time because whenever they got close enough to her for her to notice, they always were". A whore picked up in Curzon Street "worked energetically and authoritatively". Many women—too many to be plausible, perhaps—express admiration: "You were so big!" and so forth.

His fourth wife, Elena, got the same treatment. Thus, during the 1956 election campaign: ". . . we sat on the couch and listened to [Adlai] Stevenson campaigning in Madison Square Garden, I began to feel her—she was half sitting up—and she opened her legs and loved it . . . when they cut it off we went onto something more active." He continued: "Nowadays I never seem to get enough." In England, fed up with "the monastic staleness" of All Souls, Oxford, he returned hurriedly to London where "I leapt on Elena, who had gone to bed".¹⁶

THERE WAS NONE OF THIS quasi-pornographic material in the notebooks he kept during his third marriage to Mary McCarthy; or none has been published anyway. The union lasted from February 1938 to the end of the War but seems to have been a failure from the start. Sartre may have treated de Beauvoir like a slave, but he never told her what to write. Wilson, however, insisted that Mary McCarthy write fiction, and treated her like a clever schoolgirl who needed academic supervision. She apparently married him at his insistence and as a spouse found him domineering: he delivered not so much opinions as judgments, which she termed "the Authorized Version". He drank a good deal and, when drunk, sometimes became violent if her fiery spirit rebelled. Tipsy, aggressive, red-haired men (Wilson had red hair, though his eyes were brown) later figured in her stories, as did women with black eyes and bruises inflicted by husbands.¹⁷

The marriage dragged on until 1946 but the critical break came in the summer of 1944, as described by McCarthy in her

testimony during the separation petition. There had been a party for eighteen people; everyone had gone home and she was washing the dishes:

"I asked him if he would empty the garbage. He said, 'Empty it yourself.' I started carrying out two large cans of garbage. As I went through the screen door, he made an ironical bow, repeating: 'Empty it yourself.' I slapped him—not terribly hard—he went out and emptied the cans, then I went upstairs. He called me and I came down. He got up from the sofa and took a terrible swing and hit me in the face and all over. He said 'You think you're unhappy with me. Well, I'll give you something to be unhappy about.' I ran out of the house and jumped into my car."¹⁸

The row over the garbage was later described by her in *A Charmed Life* (1955), where Martha is terrified of red-haired Miles Murphy: "Nobody, except Miles, had ever browbeat her successfully . . . with Miles she had done steadily what she hated." When Mary McCarthy wrote to Wilson saying that Miles was not him, he replied that he had not read the book but "I assume it is just another of your malignant, red-haired Irishmen".

The truth is, Mary McCarthy was too strong a character and had too distinctive a talent to be a satisfactory mate to such an Olympian and demanding figure. She may, initially, have prolonged his involvement with Left-wing politics but ultimately, with her spirit of independence, she helped to disgust him with the whole idea of prescribed progressive attitudes. Her departure marked the point at which he finally ceased to be an intellectual and reassumed the far more congenial role of man of letters.

In 1941 he had bought a large, old-fashioned house at Wellfleet, Cape Cod, and later he inherited the family's stone mansion in upstate New York, thereafter moving majestically between the two, according to the seasons. His fourth wife, Elena, was born Hélène-Marthe Mumm, a half-German vintner's daughter from the Rheims champagne country. He noted, with complacent approval, that "Her frank and uninhibited animal spirits contrasted with her formal and aristocratic manners"; he found her "a great relief" and began "to function normally again". She ran his houses with a certain amount of old-style European discipline, introducing comfort and elegance into his life. He accepted this routine with satisfaction, working with his habitual relentless concentration all day, in pyjamas and dressing-gown, then emerging at 5 p.m. for what he called "the social date", in a well-pressed suit, fresh shirt and tie.

On 19 January 1948 he made a note about this new life, as a member of the traditional gentry with a literary turn. He had gone for a walk with the dogs: "they looked quite handsome against the sheet of snow." The marsh was "wide, blond and mellow under the greying Cape Cod sky". He had had "a good day's work" and had "taken two straight drinks of good Scotch". Now he "stood in the house enjoying its brightness and pleasantness—bow window in the dining room, gleam of candlesticks. . . ."¹⁹ Eight years later, he penned an essay, "The Author at Sixty", which is, in its quiet way, a hymn to the importance of tradition and continuity. "Life in the

¹⁶ Edmund Wilson: *The Twenties*, pp. 64-65, 15-16; Edmund Wilson: *The Thirties*, pp. 593, 6, 241ff, 296-97, 523; Leon Edel (ed.), *Edmund Wilson: The Forties* (1983), pp. 108-9; *Edmund Wilson: The Fifties*, pp. 582, 397, 140.

¹⁷ For example, Chapter 13 of Mary McCarthy, *The Group* (1963).

¹⁸ Quoted in Grumbach, *The Company She Kept*, pp. 117-118.

¹⁹ Edmund Wilson: *The Forties*, p. 269.

United States", he noted, "is much subject to disruptions and frustrations, catastrophic collapses and gradual peterings-out". When young he had felt threatened by such a fate but now, "in my sixty-first year, I find that one of the things which most gratify me is the sense of my continuity". He was back in the country, "surrounded by the books of my boyhood and furniture that belonged to my parents". Was he then just "in a pocket of the past"? Not at all: he was "at the centre of things—since the centre can be only in one's head—and my feelings and thoughts may be shared by many".²⁰ Here was an approach to life not too far distant from Henry James's.

YET IT IS WORTH OBSERVING that Wilson retained, even in his reincarnation as a literary gentleman, at least some of the characteristics which had pushed him into radical intellectual life. He was a man who usually strove for truth with great earnestness. But there were areas of prejudice in his mind where he kept the truth at bay with great ferocity. His Anglophobia, an amalgam of anti-imperialism, hatred of the English class system and sheer insecurity, survived the decline of all his other radical impulses. In his post-War notes one has the impression that he is actually grinding his teeth while writing: Churchill is "disgusting and intolerable". He observes (quite seriously): "*The British* are said quietly but carefully to be getting *the hemp business* into their hands"—the sort of fact, or non-fact, that a second-rate French consul might report. He took careful bearings on "the Oxford brush-off", the "competitive spitefulness of the English", "the two ways they have of saying 'Yes'"—the chilly and the insincere—the fact that "they have a special word, 'civil', for what is elsewhere mere ordinary politeness", their propensity to "foment violence", and their "international reputation as hypocrites". He refers to "*perfidie Albion*", "*la morgue anglaise*", and admits:

"I have become so *anti-British* over here that I have begun to feel sympathetic with Stalin because he is making things difficult for the English."²¹

Of another visit to England in 1954 we have not only his own, envenomed account but a delightful sketch by Isaiah Berlin, who was his host at All Souls. "My present policy in England", he announced, was to be "discreetly aggressive". He was pleased to find that English intellectuals were even more "provincial" and "isolated" than before, that Oxford had become "shabby and crumbling, scrofulous and leprous". His All Souls room was a "dismal little cell like a fourth-rate New York rooming-house" and the college servants were

"obviously disaffected". Meeting at a party E. M. Forster, "a tiny little man who might at first glance be some sort of clerk or a man in an optician's shop", he said aggressively that, while he shared Forster's enthusiasm for his three favourite books, *War and Peace*, *The Divine Comedy*, and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, "I thought that *Das Kapital* almost belonged to the same category". This was an amazing remark for a man of letters as opposed to an intellectual to make, and Wilson noted that it "disconcerted" Forster, as well it might. Forster countered by hastily bringing up the safe subject of Jane Austen, then edging away: "Well, I mustn't keep you from other people", a phrase whose dismissive irony Wilson fortunately failed to detect. When Isaiah Berlin asked him if he had "disliked every literary person he had met in London", Wilson replied: "No, I liked Evelyn Waugh and Cyril Connolly best."

"Why?"

"Because I thought they were so nasty."²²

Wilson's personal hostility towards other writers was, indeed, another characteristic he shared with many intellectuals: not even a Marx could have recorded his impressions of them with more malice. D. H. Lawrence's head was "disproportionately small. One saw that he belonged to an inferior caste—some bred-down unripening race of the collieries." There is a horrific picture of Scott Fitzgerald, pathetically drunk, lying in a corner on the floor, of Robert Lowell mad and manic, of E. E. Cummings with his "feminine" voice, of W. H. Auden, "portly and man-of-the-world . . . he suddenly began telling us he was no good at flagellation". Dorothy Parker wears too much cheap scent. Van Wyck Brooks "doesn't understand great literature", Cyril Connolly "never listens to anyone else's sallies or stories", T. S. Eliot had "a scoundrel" somewhere "inside him", the Sitwells were "of no interest".²³

There was a good deal of hatred within the Olympian judge.

There was also a lack of balance about ordinary affairs of the world which we come across time and again in the ranks of the intellectuals and which lingered on in Wilson long after he broke from them. It emerged suddenly and disastrously in Wilson's embittered battle with the officials of the American Internal Revenue Service, about which he wrote an indignant book.

His problem was quite simple: between 1946 and 1955 he did not file any income-tax returns, a serious offence in the United States as in most other countries. Indeed in America it is normally so heavily punished, by fines and jail, that when Wilson first confessed his delinquency to a lawyer he "told me at once that I was evidently in such a mess that the best thing I could do was to become a citizen of some other country. . . ."

The reasons he gave for his failure to comply with the law strike one as feeble. For most of his adult life he had been a freelance. At the end of 1943 he got a regular job on *The New Yorker*, with the tax withheld from his earnings there. In 1946 he published *Memoirs of Hecate County*, his one big commercial success. Until then his top earnings had been \$7,500 as Associate Editor of the *New Republic*. However it was in this year he got married again, and had to pay the bills for two

²⁰ Reprinted in *The Portable Edmund Wilson* (ed. Dabney, 1983), pp. 20-45.

²¹ *Edmund Wilson: The Forties*, pp. 80-157.

²² *Edmund Wilson: The Fifties*, pp. 101, 135-38, 117; Isaiah Berlin's account of Wilson's 1954 visit, published in *The New York Times*.

²³ *The Twenties*, p. 149; *The Thirties*, pp. 301-3; *The Fifties*, pp. 452ff, 604, etc; Isaiah Berlin memoir.

divorces. For these he used the *Hecate* windfall. He said he then intended to catch up with his income-tax obligations as the book was still selling well and money was coming in. But it suddenly ran into obscenity trouble and the money from it ceased. Hence: "I thought that before filing for the years since 1945 it would be better to wait until I was earning more money." That happened in 1955 when *The New Yorker* published his long and much admired study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which was made into a successful book. It was then that he went to the tax lawyer, whose advice came as a shock: "I had no idea at that time of how heavy our taxation had become or of the severity of the penalties for not filing tax returns."²⁴

This was an extraordinary admission. Here was a man who had written extensively on social, economic, and political problems throughout the 1930s and who had offered vehement advice to the authorities involving large public expenditures and the nationalisation of major industries. He had also published a large book, *To the Finland Station*, tracing with enthusiasm the development of ideas designed to revolutionise the position of ordinary people by seizing the assets of the bourgeoisie. How did he think the state paid its way during the high-spending New Deal, of which he strongly approved? Did he not feel it the personal responsibility of all to make such reforms work, especially those, like himself, who had expressed strong moral obligations towards the less-favoured? What about the Marxist tag, which he endorsed: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need"? Or did he think that applied to others but not to himself?

Was this a case, in short, of a radical who favoured humanity in general but did not think of human beings in particular? If so, he was in good, or rather bad, company, since Marx seems never to have paid one penny of income tax in his life. Wilson's attitude was in fact a striking example of the intellectual who, while telling the world how to run its business, in tones of considerable moral authority, thinks the practical consequences of such advice have nothing to do with those like himself—they are for "ordinary people".

It took two lawyers, plus accountants, five years to square Wilson's accounts with the IRS. Naturally the IRS gave him a hard time. They charged him \$69,000, made up of 6% interest over ten years, plus 90% legal penalties (50% for fraud, 25% for delinquency, 5% for failure to file and 10% for alleged under-declaration of income). This was comparatively lenient treatment since Wilson could have gone to jail for a year for each failure to file. Moreover, since he pleaded poverty and had to meet \$16,000 in legal fees, the IRS in the end let him off with a compromise settlement of \$25,000. So he should have considered himself lucky.

Instead Wilson wrote his diatribe, *The Cold War and the Income Tax: A Protest*. This was in every way an irrational response to his troubles. They had given him a frightening insight into the harshness of the modern state at its most

belligerent—the tax-gathering role—but this should have come as no surprise to an imaginative man who had made it his business to study the state in theory and in practice. The person who is in the weakest moral position to attack the state is he who has largely ignored its potential for evil while strongly backing its expansion on humanitarian grounds, and is only stirred to protest when he falls foul of it through his own negligence. That exactly describes Wilson's position. In his book he tried to evade his own inconsistencies by arguing that most of the income tax went on defence spending induced by Cold War paranoia. But then he had not paid his state income taxes either, and they did not go on defence. Nor did he meet the point that, by the time he settled, a rapidly rising proportion of federal income tax was going on welfare. Was it morally justifiable to evade that too? In short, the book shows Wilson at his worst and makes one grateful that, in general, he ceased being a political intellectual by the time he was forty.

AS IT WAS, by reverting to his true role as a man of letters, Wilson's maturity was remarkably productive. It included *The Scrolls of the Dead Sea* (1955), *Apologies to the Iroquois* (1959) on the Indian confederacy, and *Patriotic Gore* (1962) on the literature of the American Civil War. These books, and other works, were characterised by courage as well as industry—writing on the Scrolls involved learning Hebrew—and by an undeviating and relentless concern for truth. That in itself set him apart from most intellectuals. But still more so did the way in which Wilson's research and writings centred around a strong, warm, penetrating and civilised concern for people, both as groups and individuals, rather than abstract ideas. It was the same concern which gave colour and vivacity to his literary criticism, and made it so enjoyable.

For Wilson at his best kept in the forefront of his mind the realisation that books are not disembodied entities but come from the hearts and brains of living men and women, and that the key to their understanding lies in the interaction of theme and author. The cruelty of ideas lies in the assumption that human beings can be bent to fit them. The beneficence of great art consists in the way in which it builds up from the individual illumination to generality. Discussing Edna St Vincent Millay, about whom he wrote with moving brilliance, Wilson produced the perfect definition of how a poet should function:

"In giving supreme expression to profoundly felt personal experience, she was able to identify herself with more general human experience and stand forth as a spokesman for the human spirit, announcing its predicaments, its vicissitudes, but as a master of human expression, by the splendour of expression itself, putting herself beyond common embarrassments, common oppressions and panics."²⁵

It was Wilson's humanism, which enabled him to understand such processes, which saved him from the millenarian fallacy.

© Paul Johnson 1988

²⁴ Edmund Wilson, *The Cold War and the Income Tax: A Protest* (1963), pp. 7, 4.

²⁵ *The Portable Edmund Wilson*, p. 72.

THEATRE

Promise & Delight

By Edward Pearce



VEHICLES ARE unpromising things, revivals hardly less so. The revival of the smash hit of 1902 as a vehicle for Rex Harrison, a child of that era, looks doubly unpromising. But we must not be governed by prejudice. *The Admirable Crichton* still functions after 86 years, a reminder that J. M. Barrie was capable of being grown up if he applied his mind. The satire is cunningly sprinkled by gentle

aspersion on the notion of equality and the inheritors of privilege alike, as the advanced Liberal peer, with his monthly equality teas for the servants, finds himself shipwrecked with his haughty daughters and dependent on the crisp competence of a butler—impeccably inegalitarian both as hand-clasping grateful subordinate at home, and as king of a tropical island. The island serves to prove that in the kingdom of necessity, the DIY man is king.

Barrie's writing, at its best, is cool and ironical, "Was not Lord Loam entirely disdainful and contemptuous for every other day of the month?" "His lordship gave perfect satisfaction." Barrie, unlike Shaw, is not writing as a serious critic of society. He was a soft-centred accommodator who laughed with the Establishment. But enough of the barbs have gone beneath the skin and caught.

"One lady's maid for three young women! Who will dress us? Who will undress us? How will we know when to get up without someone to open the curtains for us? . . ." As an observation of contemporary royalty it still has application.

Frith Banbury presents Barrie faithfully and straight, to the extent of undertaking his full original cast of supernumary servants. When, one wonders, did we last see 27 actors on stage in the West End? In an age of accountancy and one-man shows, the Haymarket Theatre is on a cream-and-jam budget which only the presence of Rex Harrison and Edward Fox to bring in charabanc-loads of old and middle-aged devotees will make viable.

Rex Harrison (in his early eighties) follows the maxim of porcupines making love, and does everything carefully. He is a star doing a star's bit in an affable *andante moderato*, and his admirers are happy for him. Edward Fox, having

played every kind of upper-class sulk and goon (including a notable TV copy of the last Prince of Wales) adapts to the role of higher lackey delightedly, employing an Alan Bennett Church-of-England clergyman voice with a hint of clerical castrato.

But none of the fun in which the cast rightly takes pleasure quite rubs away the line delivered by the Earl's daughter when all the gentry have accepted Crichton as natural unchallenged master on the island—that she had hated his old, now discarded habit of clutching his hands together. The piece was written seven years before Lloyd George's budget and the threat of Tory Peers to die-in-the-last-ditch rather than pay Inheritance Tax. But Barrie, as an adhering, loyal North Briton, knew his Englishmen and their bump of servility. Everyone knows his place and is very happy with it. Underneath the impulse to be a man, acknowledged by Barrie in his rather limp conclusion which Edward Fox underlines by spreading free, unclutched hands, is a comfortable well-informed sense that privilege, though amendable, will continue to have a splendid run. Barrie, a far better playwright than is often alleged despite the capital charge of *Peter Pan*, operated here as a spaniel capable of biting. The instinct of William Archer, who doubted if Barrie understood the immensity of his attack on the social order, was surely right. In a country which devotes time to its high-profile Monarchy down to the last cracked finger-nail, satire upon social precedence has lost very little edge.

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, revivals and revivals. In a period remarkably fecund with Jacobean theatre—Middleton, Jonson, Tourneur, even Shirley recently on offer—it was still heroic of Jonathan Miller, in his role of Scholar-Instructor to the Nation, to throw Edward Mirvish's money at George Chapman (*Bussy D'Ambois*, Old Vic). Chapman is a speciality product—as a number of baffled, lost reviews indicated.

There is very little actual theatre in the vulgar dramatic sense. Speeches are made and answered in a high Ciceronian manner. The audience is credited with a desire to hear poetry, a willingness to concentrate and to take a plot as much explained as enacted. Chapman is pure box-office Hell. He is also fairly close to being a major poet. The effect of *Bussy D'Ambois* for anyone with half-an-ear was inspirational:

*Man is of two sweet courtly friends compact
A mistress and a servant; let my death
Define life nothing but a courtier's breath.
Nothing is made of nought, of all things made
Their abstract being a dream but of a shade. . . .
Here like a Roman statue will I stand
Till Death hath made me marble. Oh my fame
Live in despite of murder; take thy wings. . . .
. . . fly where men feel
The burning axletree; and those that suffer
Beneath the chariot of the snowy Bear
And tell them that D'Ambois is now hasting
To the eternal dwellers. . . .*

This, *à mon avis*, is dramatic poetry of an astonishingly

high order. Merely in giving it to us Dr Miller has performed a great service. We are not inundated with superfluous major poetry. The most mediocre production would have been achievement enough. As it is, Miller's version is extraordinarily sensible in company with the delicate, unpretentious simplicity of the set. Whatever the case for performing *Much Ado* as a house party in one of the politer Southern states in the era of President Taft, or *As You Like It* in plus-fours (undertakings which may very well work), the new-discovered country requires presentation to be penny-plain and faithful.

The company is matter-of-factly dressed in accurate early-17th-century costume; there are no distractions, no superfluous stage business, and we are, as an audience, asked to work and listen. Miller can, especially when let loose on a programme note, be irritatingly pretentious; but that is the price one pays for him being a genuinely serious man, an intellectual in the high, aspiring, Continental sense of the word.

He is served well by David Threlfall, speaking throughout in accents which my *Sunday Times* colleague John Peter has asked to have identified. I can answer that question. Mr Threlfall speaks his knight's verse in the dour and apt manner of the North Riding of Yorkshire, location of his first stage triumph as Smeke in *Nicholas Nickleby*. It works, since this Bussy is conceived as a man who breaks the rules by his fierce affair with the wife of Montsurry, who defies the wishes of his patron that he should kill the King, who is *condottiere* and knight, solitary, defiant, honouring his own bleak morality. He is a terse man required to speak eloquence. The flat northern voice, beautifully articulated and pellucid, is right.

Bussy stands in contradistinction to Monsieur, brother to the King, patron to Bussy:

... and your voice
Is like an eastern wind, that where it flies
Knits nests of caterpillars. . . .
... a tongue so scandalous 'twill cut
The purest crystal; and a breath that will
Kill to that wall a spider. . . .

Hugh Ross is elegant in his evil-doing, offering a soft-voiced, chartered-accountancy sort of criminality; it is ele-

gantly done, as ingratiating as poisoned butter. But all the actors, these two as well as Sara Kestelman (Bussy's intense, combative mistress, Tamyra) and John Grillo's doe-eyed, naive friar, are caught up beyond normal acting practice with the splendour of words.

There are affinities of a sort here with French classical tragedy. Chapman actually breaks all the rules with torture (toned down in this production) and murder on stage in the crammed and astonishing last act. But he manages for much of the time to sound like French classical drama, except that it quite outruns the thin aquarium theatre of the preserved French classics by the measure that a great vocabulary of rich words exceeds a pinched and squeaky one.

Chapman was not part of the native style. More learned, and at times more oppressed by learning than his rough contemporaries, the translator of Homer sets his own terms. But English vigour keeps breaking in. It is as if Chapman would have liked to reproduce Seneca, and had he lived so long would have admired the cardboard Corneille. But the Northern lyric zest of the English language is Chapman's talisman against writing the opera without music applauded in Paris.

Bussy D'Ambois is not for those seeking diversion. It is high tragedy without adornment, done to a very high level of acting skill. It yields enormous rewards for those who listen. For my part, I spent an evening enthralled by the splendours which the piece contains, and grateful that a management choosing to take the high road had declined the devices which might have lightened Chapman and lost him.

There is a scholarly theory that the rival poet of Shakespeare's sonnets may have been Chapman, not Marlowe. As I listened to Mr Threlfall and Mr Ross, the sonnet reference to that poet and "the sail of his great verse" suddenly became entirely apt.

REVIVAL OF A LIGHTER SORT is made available at the Royal Court, with a brisk, proficient version of Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer*. Farquhar and Vanbrugh, writing at the very turn of their century, always strike me as different in kind from Restoration drama proper of 20

Shakespeare among the Guerrillas



^{Lusaka}
MR "CHRIS" Martin Thembisile Hani has been running ANC guerrilla operations inside South Africa. In an important reshuffle, Mr Hani, aged 45, was appointed chief of staff and deputy commander of "Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation)", the guerrilla wing of the ANC.

KNOWN UNIVERSALLY by his Umkhonto name "Chris", Mr Hani replaced Mr Joe Slovo, a white former Johannesburg lawyer, who is now devoting himself to the chairmanship of the outlawed South African Communist Party, which operates in alliance with the ANC.

IN HIS FIRST press interview since taking up his new position, Mr Hani is unapologetic in his support for the selective killing of Black "collaborators", such as policemen and township councillors, an aspect which leaders of the organisation's political wing tend to play down, ascribing such killings to the "spontaneous anger" of the people.

Hani obtained a BA degree in Latin and English in 1962, then joined a Cape Town law firm.

"I WAS FASCINATED by Shakespeare's plays. Now and then when I travel I carry some of his plays with me, especially *Hamlet*", Hani said.

But he does not share the philosophical doubts of the eponymous hero of that drama. "I want to believe that I am decisive. It helps me to be decisive when I read *Hamlet*."

Michael Hornsby
in THE TIMES (London)

and 30 years earlier. It is not just that the lickerish quality of Wycherley has been civilised but this play, if it lacks the final refinements of Congreve, has also cast off the mincing, super-sensible affectations of his era. The *squisitissimo* has given way to something more robust, and better natured. We are part of the way towards the world of Henry Fielding. English theatre might decline into the undiscovered country that the 18th-century stage still largely is, but the stamp was being put on a native form of comedy, rough, sceptical, and generous, which would find expression in narrative form.

The production by Max Stafford-Clark is blessedly free of the social awareness with which he has brilliantly marred many an inoffensive text before now. It suffers, one must ungallantly say, from a weak Silvia in Lesley Sharp—short on comedy, so anxious not to be playing principal boy that she sounds like a concerned member of a women's group. Plume (David Haig) has no great problems, Sergeant Kite (Jim Broadbent) has his moments; but everyone in this production

is magniloquently upstaged by the sheer force of theatrical personality of Ron Cook as the impudent, cowardly, bombastic Captain Brazen.

Looking astonishingly like the late Lord George-Brown, Mr Cook takes a larcenous view of the entire production. This kind of thing can happen to the most intellectually earnest directors. Old-fashioned personality, a clown's genius for self-projection, and the engendering of laughter by the intimation "I am funny", assume an undirectable life of their own.

It is anyway very very hard to make a mess of this combination of cool satire, suppressed melancholy, and comedy intended to be laughed at. With Ron Cook dazzling his way through, the director reticent, and the cast solidly competent, we have one of the most enjoyable evenings available in London.

That is not the sole, never mind the high, purpose of theatre—but enjoyment has its uses.

AUTHORS

Melvin J. Lasky, Co-Editor of *ENCOUNTER* since 1958, is the author of *Africa for Beginners* (1962) and *Utopia and Revolution* (University of Chicago Press, 1976). *On the Barricades, & Off*, a collection of his *ENCOUNTER* essays, will be published this year by Transaction Books. His article, "The Ideas of '68", is an expanded version of a contribution to a symposium on the Student Revolt, published by the US monthly *The World & I*.

Aileen Ireland, who is a senior lecturer in English at Bretton Hall College, Yorkshire, has had two stories broadcast on BBC Radio Three and a third is being recorded. She is currently working on a novel.

George Urban, who was Director of Radio Free Europe from 1983-86, graduated from the University of Budapest in 1947 and in 1956 obtained his Ph.D. at the University of London. He served with the BBC from 1958-60 and then as director of university broadcasting and academic consultant for RFE. Among numerous other publications, he has edited *Détente* (1976), *Hazards of Learning* (1977), and *Stalinism: Its Impact on Russia and the World* (1982), all published by Maurice Temple Smith. Many of the extended conversations which appear in his books had their first publication in *ENCOUNTER*.

Gerard Woodward is an anthropology student at the London School of Economics. He has had work published in *Stand* magazine, *PN Review*, and *Ambit*, and was a prizewinner in the 1987 National Poetry Competition.

Kenneth Minogue is Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics. His articles for *ENCOUNTER* include "Marx and Vico" (January 1986) and "The Idea of Liberty & the Dream of Liberation" (July-August 1987). His most recent book is *Alien Powers: The Pure Theory of Ideology* (Weidenfeld, 1985).

Jean-François Revel, the French philosopher and critic, writes a regular column for *Le Point* in Paris. His most recently translated work, *How Democracies Perish*, was published in 1985 by Weidenfeld (London) and Doubleday (New York).

Vernon Bogdanor, Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, is the author of many books, including *Changing British and American Party*

Systems (Praeger, 1984) and *What is Proportional Representation?* (Martin Robertson, 1984), and editor of *Representatives of the People?* (Gower Press, 1986), and *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Institutions* (1987). His latest book, *Constitutions in Democratic Politics*, was published in March by Gower.

Sir Anthony Parsons, part-time lecturer and research fellow at the University of Exeter, is a retired member of the British diplomatic service, having served in the British embassies in Baghdad, Amman, Ankara, Cairo and Khartoum. He was Ambassador in Tehran from 1974-79 and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, 1979-82.

Max Beloff, Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Administration, University of Oxford, from 1957-74, and Principal of the University College at Buckingham, 1974-79, was created a life peer in 1981. His most recent article in *ENCOUNTER* was "Cross-Bench Biographies" (May 1988).

Brian Dooley, a former member of Senator Edward Kennedy's staff, now works as a journalist. His work has appeared in *The Guardian*, *New Statesman*, *Toronto Star*, and *New Socialist*.

Edward Shils is Professor on the Committee of Social Thought at the University of Chicago, and Honorary Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge.

Paul Johnson, who was editor of the *New Statesman*, is a well-known journalist and author. Among his books are *A History of Christianity* (1976), *A History of the Modern World* (1983), *A History of the English People* (1985), and *A History of the Jews* (1987). His study of *Edmund Wilson* appears in his latest work, *Intellectuals*, published on 3 October by Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Edward Pearce is a columnist for *The Sunday Times*, and author of two volumes of sketches of Parliamentary personalities, *The Senate of Lilliput* and *Hummingbirds and Hyenas* (Faber, 1983, 1985). His latest book, *Looking Down on Mrs Thatcher*—published in 1987 by Hamish Hamilton—includes several of his political commentaries from *ENCOUNTER*.

LETTERS

"Lord Haw-Haw"

IN THE FASCINATING piece on Ezra Pound's wartime broadcasts (*ENCOUNTER*, June 1988) Humphrey Carpenter gives further currency to the popular misunderstanding about the origin of William Joyce's nickname. He says that

"Joyce, an Irishman, aped the 'typical' Englishman by assuming an absurd upper-crust manner, which quickly earned him the nickname 'Lord Haw-Haw'."

Not so. The nickname was earned by his predecessor at the German microphone, who I believe was the renegade British officer Norman Baillie Stewart. He had previously achieved a brief notoriety as "the prisoner in the Tower". This man did indeed have an absurd upper-crust accent which earned him ridicule in the British press and the title "Lord Haw-Haw".

Within a very short time, in mid-September 1939, the original Lord Haw-Haw was replaced by an anonymous broadcaster whom we later knew to be William Joyce. He inherited both the job and the nickname, though it did not suit him at all. Rebecca West described the "rasping yet rich" quality of his voice which "made it difficult not to go on listening". (It was certainly not Bertie Wooster speaking.)

I heard them both on the radio, and it annoyed me that what had been an apt nickname for a silly ass was transferred mindlessly to the bitter and sardonic personality of his much more sinister successor.

A. K. MILNE

Gillingham
Dorset

End of the American Empire?

IT IS A PITY, if not perverse, that Anthony Hartley should conclude his—mostly—thorough and thoughtful review of Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* ("End of American Empire?", *ENCOUNTER*, July-August) with the blunt assertion that "the absolute power primacy of the United States is not—and will not be—in question". Contrary to his questioning subtitle, the "Kennedy Thesis" is hard to dismiss. Like all else, Empires do come and go. As they rise each carries within it the seeds of its own decay. When you are Number One the only way is down!

The fact that Kennedy became a best-

seller in America confirms his quotation from G. K. Chesterton that a strong man does not worry about his bodily efficiency: only when he weakens does he begin to talk about his health.

The USA now faces a frightening, self-inflicted threat to its economic and financial health—the twin pillars of its prosperity and power. The Reaganomic boom has been built on ever-increasing pyramids of thousands of billions of dollars of internal and external public and private debt. In the space of a few years during this decade, America has been transformed from the world's largest creditor to the world's largest debtor nation. As Kennedy says, the only other example in modern history of a great power so increasing its indebtedness in peacetime is France in the 1780s, where the fiscal crisis largely led to the French Revolution. Can Anthony Hartley give an example of "unquestioned" imperial supremacy built on a mountain of debt? This is an issue squarely addressed by Paul Kennedy and not by him.

The financial condition of the USA is now an economic H-Bomb waiting to go off. When it does the dollar will cease to be king and its fall will drag the rest of the world's economies with it. That will surely put an end to America's hegemony and lead to a new constellation of powers in the world.

JOHN M. WEINER

St Leonards
Hertfordshire

On Not Getting a Ph.D.

I WAS INTERESTED to read Elie Kedourie's article in the June *ENCOUNTER* "On Not Getting a Ph.D." I know of several people with similar experiences. In 1977 my D.Phil. on "Inspiration in Milton and Keats" was turned down unconditionally (not referred) by Oxford University, and shortly afterwards accepted for publication by Macmillan. At the time I wrote an account of my *Viva* to record the gruesome farcicality of the conversation between myself and my examiners. Neither of them had any intellectual or psychological grasp of my particular subject of "inspiration", and both exhibited an irrational antagonism towards it—one in the form of a panicky hostility and the other in the form of a complacent, commonsensical philistinism. I was confronted continuously with meaningless, unanswerable questions such as, "You can't really believe this, can you?"

D. Phil. candidates have the opportunity to object to any on a list of potential examiners. Although I was aware that neither of mine would have approached my subject in the way that I did, I was unprepared for their utter inability to dissociate matters of opinion

from matters of scholarship. Even had I objected beforehand, the problem would still have remained: who could one trust to be any better? On reflection, I began to see how the Oxford D.Phil. examination system, through its very organisation, tends to discourage intellectual and, more particularly, emotional integrity, on the part of the examiners. The *Viva* is no longer (as it was originally intended to be) a public confrontation; it is a secret court, under no obligation to provide reasons for its actions or opinions (I received no reason for refusal whatsoever). In a situation where there are only two examiners, and not only no jury but not even an observational or recording body, the scene is set for the stronger to sway the weaker or indeed for any other species of *folie à deux* potentially to take over. There is no point in an examinee defending his thesis when there is, in effect, no one to listen, and I am pretty sure that my examiners would not have indulged their hostility so illogically had the nature of their questioning been exposed to external scrutiny.

All academic institutions are faced with what is probably an insoluble problem of how to "maintain standards" without aligning themselves with the "enemies of promise" and stamping out originality—which, by definition, disturbs the *status quo*. "Originality" is a stated requirement of an Oxford thesis, yet it is one whose psychological implications, together with the stress these place on members of the Establishment, have received too little recognition. Examination systems at this "adult" level will, like the law, never coincide fully with justice; but at least they could be kept under review in the light of this dilemma.

MEG HARRIS WILLIAMS

Surrey

Fantasy & Parody

NOT that there was not extensive documentation to support Melvin J. Lasky's clinical theses about "The Cycles of Western Fantasy" (*Encounter*, February)—but your readers may be interested in yet another almost incredible footnote. The cycle keeps spinning.

One of the most popular of British satirical TV programmes, *Spitting Image*, recently included a parody of—among others (a screeching Mrs Thatcher, a blubbing President Reagan)—Mikhail Gorbachov. A Professor of Political Science at the University of London did not find it at all funny. In his column in *The Times* (8 March 1988) Ben Pimlott tried to explain why, alone of all people in the world, Gorbachov's physical features ("moist and floppy lower lip, furrowed

brow, livid strawberry mark, and bulbous popping eyes") have to be exempted from parodic, satiric thrusts. Indeed why in the nature of things he just cannot be lampooned . . . because, Professor Pimlott writes with reverential incantatory pomp, "Mikhail Gorbachov has become a symbol, in the West, of something that cannot be caricatured: hope."

"Who provides the world's best chance for peace and orderly disarmament? The near-united answer is Gorbachov. Who is offering the Soviet peoples their best prospect of human rights since 1917? Gorbachov. Who would like to introduce a measure of democracy? Gorbachov. Who is determined to modernise the Soviet economy, and has an eye on some Western freedoms with this in mind? Gorbachov. Who, by Western common consent, is the best Russian leader for a century or two? Who would be an enjoyable companion at dinner? Gorbachov, Gorbachov."

If this were not meant with deadly seriousness, it could itself be taken for a sly and pointed caricature. Fantasiers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your sense of humour!

PHILIP BENJAMIN

Cambridge

Grizzly Bear, Cuddly Bear

ONE can only hope that your "Cycles of Western Fantasy" (ENCOUNTER, February) will be read attentively by every Western diplomat and foreign-affairs editor. From time to time, in fact, Ministers in European governments and even in the evidently gullible White House issue critical statements, suggesting that they want to "stop the cycle and get off"—off the fantasy trip sedulously cultivated by Mikhail Gorbachov and his ingenious staff of new-style Kremlin propagandists. But, despite their cool words, the East-West "peace process" has begun, and the initiatives are in the calculating hands of the Soviet Union. The rest of the world shows Russian TV film on how Gorbachov is "bringing the boys home" from Afghanistan. In East Germany a propaganda coup is achieved with the Red Army being the first to withdraw the annulled INF weapons for "destruction". In the next months the Soviet "liberal leadership" may show itself to be reasonable and moderate negotiators in the crisis in their far-flung Empire—why doesn't the West raise the question of *their* "decolonisation"?—and they may win points in Armenia, Azerbaijan, etc.

The historical sense of scepticism which Melvin J. Lasky recommends is

necessary and proper. Diplomats and statesmen show sound instincts when suspicion is aroused about the vast publicity machine which the Gorbachov régime has set in motion. It is only the concentrated wisdom of the past that a London leader-writer (in the *Daily Mail*) formulated when he wrote:

"... it is when they are most seductive that the Russians are most to be feared. It is the cuddly bear not the grizzly who should worry us the most."

Stalin himself put it more paradoxically, and more succinctly, by quoting an old Russian proverb (to a Central Committee meeting of the Soviet Communist Party, in April 1929): "An obliging bear is more dangerous than an enemy. . . ."

IAN MACGREGOR

Edinburgh

Unimaginative Architecture

DAVID ANSTIS's argument ("Brown Bread & Glass Fibre", ENCOUNTER, July-August 1988) will continue to confuse the ordinary observer—and city-dweller—about what is considered good architecture, and why. Some of us will not be easily persuaded that the golden age of modernist architecture was (or ever has been) at heart "socially caring", or "clearly rational". One does not have to read Tom Wolfe to be aware that much of modern architecture meets only very marginally Mr Anstis's claimed criteria. Not for nothing have so many modernist structures become socially unsafe, hooligan-haunted, and its denizens bereft of any social cohesion. The new brutalism in architecture, doubtless, influenced the life-styles of not a few of its younger inhabitants (as we can all read in the newspapers). "Unafraid of new technologies" might have been the vision of the modernists—but what is one to make of drab, dirty, high-rise buildings with too many flats, and woefully few and appallingly maintained lifts for its inhabitants. Condemning old and infirm inhabitants of such dwellings to immobility—as most of the few existing lifts in such tower-blocks are invariably "out-of-order"—seems to me execrably bad architectural planning.

Architecture must serve the needs of individuals and families; and, accordingly, its practitioners should endeavour to sublimate their artistic impulses to harness more fully their engineering training. Brown bread buildings, Mr Anstis informs *ex cathedra*, are frowned upon "as they imply yesteryear's security"; but does he not realise that in this fast changing world, remnants of architectural folk-memory may be a solace?

By contrast, in the unchanging '30s world of the Baldwin age, and the drab '40s and early '50s of the Attlee age, many changes were eagerly seized upon.

But what makes such astounding reading in this article is the denigration of small windows in the "brown bread buildings" while, of course, the same small windows have become the hallmark of so many modern buildings praised by Antis—dirty concrete high-rise or stuccoed aberrations. I would have thought that in a country like Britain, not particularly burdened with good light or with lots of sun, building large windows is sensible. Antis further confuses the reader about windows when he writes that

"only rarely . . . does the technology attempt a true historical return with, for example, small windows corresponding to the need to avoid weakening the massive load-bearing walls in which they are inserted."

Phew! Since the shared sides of the walls of terraced houses carry most of the weight, why not use large windows on external cross walls? Original 17th-century Dutch, late 19th-century Pont Street Dutch, or the free-standing 17th- and 18th-century Palladian, Georgian, or Victorian buildings all luxuriated in rooms with good light through large windows. The same applies to skyscrapers in the USA. Why diminish the size of windows now, when up-to-date technology ought to devise a workable alternative? Engineer architects to the fore!

Much as I love Britain, I can't quite go along with Anstis's argument that Britain has "been the source of architectural example and international fame on and off during the last 40 years". He goes on to quote the Festival Hall as a rather shining on-and-off example. When that hall or the adjacent Shell buildings were built, it must have been a very off period for modern architecture!

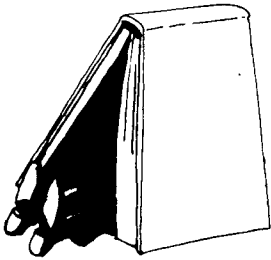
The boorish, undecorated exteriors of the numerous examples of Brutalism since 1945 should be consciously replaced by better design, superior infrastructure, more colour, more decoration, and more experimentation in the use of materials. We should put behind us the Stalinist phase of architecture, with its puritanical stance and concrete jungles to conceal its inner uncertainties. Let us abandon the constraints of collectivism, authoritarianism, and mistakenly believed socialist reductionism—and "liberate the imagination" . . . in architecture too!

NICHOLAS A. H. STACEY

London

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
Thamesmouth Printing Group,
17-21 Hovefields Avenue, Basildon, Essex

Life & Letters Today



LIT. CRIT. It was Graham Greene who said the only reason everyone thinks "Don Quixote" is such a wonderful book, is that nobody has ever read it. Anthony Burgess immediately swore that he had, but elsewhere the silence was deafening. Cross your heart, and hope to die—have you read "Don Quixote"? All the way through?

I was thinking [writes Martyn Harris] of Greene this week because I was invited to appear on a Radio 4 books programme. For this, two guests each select two of their favourite paperbacks, and one of the things my fellow guest had chosen was Zola's "Germinal". Was I familiar with the novel, the producer wanted to know?

Well of course I was familiar with it. I did English at university, didn't I? (It was the sort of university where you *did* English rather than read it.) "Germinal" was on the 19th Century Realism course. We did it the same week as "Madame Bovary", "Scarlet and Black", "Old Goriot", and "Fathers and Sons". I can remember "Germinal". It was about France.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

LONDON MADAM OF THE HOUSE? Sir, I note that Lord Justice Woolf has set his seal on "My Lady Lord Justice Butler-Sloss" as the correct mode of address for that lady ("The Times Law Report").

May we take it that the first lady Speaker of the House of Commons will be addressed by members as "Mrs Mr Speaker, Madam Sir"?

THE TIMES

LAS VEGAS CAESARIAN GRAMMAR: Every year, 20 million people visiting Las Vegas get a frisson of excitement as they glide into the most extraordinary hotel in the world to a booming salutation from the loudspeakers:

"I, Caesar, bid you welcome to my Palace of Pleasure, a royal wonderland of luxury and excitement."

In over 25 years of travelling to all manner of exotic—and not so exotic places, I have never seen [John Dickie writes] any hotel quite like Caesars Palace for its sumptuous life-style.

The only thing missing at this modern-day Roman extravaganza called Caesars Palace is . . . an apostrophe.

But they anticipate and deflect any irritation at this minor defect by leaving you a printed "Royal Reminder" which sends you off with a smile saying:

"With apologies to astute grammarians, there is no apostrophe in Caesars Palace."

DAILY MAIL

NEW YORK CITY CONCOCTIONS: I realise [Calvin Trillin writes] that cynical people think Larry Speakes' book revealed his quote-concocting for Ronald Reagan simply because a kiss-and-tell book about the White House has to include a couple of newsworthy revelations to get any attention. But maybe he was just trying to take a little credit. People in Washington

are always bragging about putting words in other people's mouths.

I suspect that any number of people claimed credit for the truly memorable quotations of American history. In previous eras they just didn't have kiss-and-tell books or television talk shows available to spread their claims around. I can imagine some ambitious young 18th-century staff man dropping into the most gossipy tavern in the colonies to hint that he made up "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country" when he discovered that Nathan Hale had thought of nothing to say on the gallows beyond "All in all, I'd rather be in Philadelphia". It wouldn't surprise me to learn that even among pioneer Mormon families there was someone who claimed to have made up Brigham Young's famous pronouncement on reaching the great salt plains of Utah—"This is the place"—because it sounded a lot better than what Young actually said, which was "Talk about flat!"

NEW YORK NEWSDAY

BRUSSELS NYET: The crew of a Norwegian merchantman got close enough to a Soviet submarine to throw the crew a gift of magazines, a NATO official said today. An oil rig supply ship spotted the sub as it surfaced in international waters in the Barents Sea.

The Norwegians waved and threw the pornographic magazines on the deck in a plastic bag and asked if the Soviets had any vodka. The answer was "No".

LONDON EVENING STANDARD

LONDON A LITTLE LEARNING: A pedant has complained [Susan Crosland writes] about "Who's Who" allowing those it lists to write their own entries. Yet that is precisely what makes "Who's Who" so riveting: the way people want us to see them reveals infinitely more about them than a chapter-and-verse biography ever could.

For instance, Tony Benn:

In 1966, "Anthony (Neil) Wedgwood Benn" was educated at "Westminster School; New Coll, Oxford, MA 1949".

In 1971, "Anthony (Neil Wedgwood) Benn" records his education as "MA Oxford, 1949".

In 1973, his education is: "since leaving university".

In 1974: "still in progress".

Someone must have teased him about his little amendments, for in 1983 "Tony Benn" erased all reference to his education.

SUNDAY TIMES



LONDON RACISM? Although "Little Black Sambo" has derogatory connotations in this country, that certainly isn't the case in Japan where such dolls are openly on sale.

The term "sambo" (zambo) arrived in Japan just before the end of the 19th century, not via Europe or the US, but via the Philippines, then a Spanish possession.

"Zambo" (zamba, feminine) is a Latin American term describing a person of mixed Negro and Indian parentage; hence the widely popular ethnic dance "Zamba" (anglice, samba). Surprisingly, no one in this country has yet tried to have the samba proscribed as a racist dance.

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

CONSIDERING WRITERS

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Transparency and Obstruction

JEAN STAROBINSKI

Translated by
Arthur Goldhammer
Introduction by
Robert J. Morrissey

This classic work by one of Europe's foremost literary critics is "the second best book ever written about Rousseau, the best one being, of course, the one Rousseau wrote about himself.... [It] is everything a commentary should be. It is an exploration that reveals a great deal to those who have read Rousseau carefully but cannot have noticed all that Starobinski, who is both a literary critic and a psychiatrist, has found."—Judith N. Shklar, *The New Republic*

The Female Autograph

Theory and Practice of Autobiography from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century

DOMNA C. STANTON, editor

The essays in this collection investigate women's strategies for writing about the self, from tenth-century Japanese diaries and *The Book of Margery Kempe* to autobiographical fragments by a woman who became a czarist cavalry officer and by a contemporary Palestinian poet. 12 halftones



The Autobiography of Mrs. Oliphant

With a new Foreword by
Laurie Langbauer

This amazing Victorian wrote nearly one hundred books, including *The Chronicles of Carlingford*, raised a large family, and pursued friendships with such literary eminences as Carlyle, Tennyson, and Leslie Stephen. Her story is "exhilarating....The vivacity of [the book] is a matter not merely of anecdote but of meticulous candour."—Susannah Clapp, *London Review of Books*

All except *Jane Austen* are available in paperback.

For information on these or on any of the thousands of our other books in print, write to:
126 Buckingham Palace Road
London SW1W 9SD or to:
5801 Ellis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60637, U.S.A.

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde after One Hundred Years

WILLIAM VEEDER and
GORDON HIRSCH, editors

On the centenary of Stevenson's famous novella, various scholars consider its peculiar status as part high, part popular, art. The insights of deconstruction, feminism, genre studies, and intellectual history provide a broad, contemporary perspective. Surviving fragments of manuscript drafts are presented, together with an extensive bibliography, while Veeder's introduction surveys the novella's history and the process of its creation. 36 halftones.

Jane Austen

Women, Politics, and the Novel

CLAUDIA L. JOHNSON

Johnson argues that Austen's apparent silence on topical issues ought to be seen not as a limitation or as a retreat from the political but rather as a strategy to depolemize the treatment of politics in her fiction. She could explore chinks in traditional institutions—marriage, primogeniture, patriarchy—without seeming to advocate the radical reconstitution of society or the abolition of all networks of authority. "A brilliant, witty, and historically well-informed book—the best single book on Jane Austen for a decade or more." —Margaret Anne Doody, Princeton University

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS